

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

Horizon

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

THE EVOLUTION OF CHARLES DARWIN. BY DOUGLAS HUBBLE

MRS. WHITE. ANONYMOUS (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)
TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR WALEY

ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF PAINTING. BY JUAN GRIS

BACK TO ITALY AND GREECE: II. BY RAYMOND MORTIMER

POEMS. BY LAURIE LEE

REVIEWS. BY ALAN PRYCE-JONES AND JULIA STRACHEY

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HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

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COMMENT

THE *New Republic* is a tough homogeneous American weekly, more hot for left-wing certainty than our own *New Statesman*, and considerably less warm for the humanities. I have just come across a recent number in which the leading literary article castigates a minor English writer, whose name, since he is notoriously touchy, for the moment escapes me. 'Mr. —', the article concludes, 'seems well fitted, by precept and example, to preside as *arbiter elegantiarum* over the cultural disintegration of the Empire. His work serves more or less authoritative notice that England, long declining into a second-class power, has begun her decline into a second-class culture.'

And aren't you pleased, Mr. Levin! For as always when encountering anti-British feeling one is struck by the short-sighted complacency of those who create it, as of a son who gets drunk to celebrate his father having lost all his money. If, for example, we substitute France for England in Mr. Levin's sentence (which remains neither more nor less true), a considerable amount of self-satisfaction seems to ebb from it, for we all perceive that a second-rate France would be a disaster; and even substituting Germany for England is not reassuring. For we know now that culture, like peace, is indivisible, that when the culture of a country becomes second-class, the culture of another does not at once jump up and become first-class. There is simply that much first-class culture the less. If Mr. Levin did not suffer from that particular form of inferiority complex which is the intellectual fear and jealousy of Britain (the same attitude towards France is its equivalent here), he would be wringing his hands at having to make such a statement. For, of course, he is right. We are 'declining into a second-class culture'—like the rest of the world. What else is to be expected after the Nine Years' War? We are entering an age of Inflationary Decadence, an age when rewards increase as standards decline. Sometimes the State provides the inflation (for example, Ehrenbourg), sometimes a political movement (Aragon), sometimes a mass publishing house or Hollywood or the Press. Thus in Europe inflation takes the form of honouring the writer while neglecting his work. The writer becomes a public figure and his reputation as a public figure, his

platform manner, his political views, coagulate into something more real than his literary reputation; he becomes a symbol, an expression of a certain attitude, and whenever that attitude is required he is in demand by people to whom his work may be quite unknown. Ultimately, the public figure devours the private one. In America the inflation is monetary—the author's work is filmed or pulped into gigantic cheap editions until it is quite natural to write with an eye only to the films or these cheap editions, at which moment the writer is usually dropped for one whose reputation is fresher.

Mr. Levin gives a few facts to substantiate his attack:

1. 'The ebb and flow of political exile and artistic expatriation have lately indicated that the centre of Anglo-American gravity is shifting towards this country.' Granted, but with the recovery of Europe and the cost of living increasing in America, as in 1920, it may well shift back.

2. 'The spread of Basic English, far from presaging a revival of British imperialism, seems actually to threaten an encroachment of the East upon the West, modifying the language of Shakespeare to suit the convenience of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek'—or enriching for her, as likely as not, the language of Hemingway.

3. 'The fact that, after twenty years of Bernard Shaw's dotage, his birthday interview is still the event of the literary season, is something less than a sign of vitality.' This seems to me like questioning the vitality of Mr. Levin in writing a book on Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, because the one is dead and the other never existed.

4. 'Some resourceful French critics, *faute de mieux*, have gone so far as to take Charles Morgan seriously.' And a million Americans have bought *Brideshead Revisited*. Is that our fault, too?

5. 'The accumulating recognition of so sincere, so sensitive and so essentially a minor writer as E. M. Forster is a damaging admission that England has no major novelist.' Yes, we may perhaps have no major novelist, though the recognition of Forster is due rather to the fact that, writing in an age of major novelists, he happened to be thirty years ahead of his time.

Well, there are three writers whom I envy America: Hemingway as a novelist, Edmund Wilson as a critic, and E. E. Cummings

as a poet. America possesses many more good writers, but those three have something which we are inclined to lack (perhaps because they are father's boys and our literature is apt to be made by those more influenced by their mothers); that is to say, they are illusion-free and unite a courageous heart-whole emotional drive to an adult and lively intellectual toughness. Many possess this union but few write so well.

Meanwhile, what's to be done to prevent our culture becoming even more second-class? HORIZON takes the matter very seriously. The current number is for those who wish in summer to relax and enjoy a story as perfect as Mr. Waley's, or scenes of travel as rich as Mr. Mortimer's.

'August for the people and their favourite islands.'

But in September we intend to open a long-drawn-out campaign which will start by consideration of the basic factor in Inflationary Decadence: the ways in which contemporary writers are compelled to earn their livings.

HORIZON HOLIDAY COMPETITION

Entries will be considered up to 10 October

LAURIE LEE
DAY OF THESE DAYS

SUCH a morning it is when love
leans through geranium windows
and calls with a cockerel's tongue.

When red-haired girls scamper like roses
over the rain-green grass;
and the sun drips honey.

When hedgerows grow venerable,
berries dry black as blood,
and holes suck in their bees.

Such a morning it is when mice
run whispering from the church,
dragging dropped ears of harvest.

When the partridge draws back his spring
and shoots like a buzzing arrow
over grained and mahogany fields.

When no table is bare,
and no breast dry,
and the tramp feeds on ribs of rabbit.

Such a day it is when time
piles up the hills like pumpkins,
and the streams run golden.

When all men smell good,
and the cheeks of girls
are as baked bread to the mouth.

As bread and beanflowers
the touch of their lips,
and their white teeth sweeter than cucumbers.

APRIL RISE

If ever I saw blessing in the air
I see it now in this still early day
Where lemon-green the vaporous morning drips
Wet sunlight on the powder of my eye.

Blown bubble film of blue, the sky wraps round
Weeds of warm light whose every root and rod
Splutters with soapy green, and all the world
Sweats with the bead of summer in its bud.

If ever I heard blessing it is there
Where birds in trees that shoals and shadows are
Splash with their hidden wings, and drops of sound
Break on my ears their crests of throbbing air.

Pure in the haze the emerald sun dilates,
The lips of mosses milk the spongy stones,
While white as water by the lake a girl
Swims her green hand among the gathered swans.

Now, as the almond burns its smoking wick,
Dropping small flames to light the candled grass;
Now, as my low blood scales its second chance,
If ever world were blessed, now it is.

DOUGLAS HUBBLE

THE EVOLUTION OF CHARLES DARWIN

ONLY three pictures in the life of Charles Darwin are essential for the understanding of his personality. The first portrays him in Shrewsbury, the home of his boyhood; the second depicts the naturalist in the *Beagle*, collecting and classifying while the great synthesis was taking shape in his mind; the third and final portrait shows him with his wife and children at Downe in Kent, where he spent nearly forty years of his life. Through these three phases his life-work grew and expanded, nourished and protected by his secret personality and by subordinated circumstance, until it transcended and obliterated all other aspects of his life with the exception of his family ties and affections.

Of his life at 'The Mount', Shrewsbury, his granddaughter, Lady Nora Barlow, in her recent book¹ tells little that is new. We knew enough of the family background there to analyse its effect on the growing Charles, but we should have been grateful for the publication of the passages that were omitted from the original edition of his famous *Autobiography*.

Lady Barlow edits with skill and enthusiasm thirty-six letters, and the small notebooks in which Charles wrote his scientific jottings and traveller's tales during the five years of the voyage. This new material enlarges, but does not alter, our conception of the ardent and absorbed naturalist. With Darwin's third phase, of achievement and invalidism, her book is not concerned, and it is inconceivable that fresh knowledge could add any important detail to the account of life at Down House already told by Charles and his children. As a picture of happy family life in the nineteenth century, it has few equals. Here Darwin wrote his masterpiece, and here his children grew to serene and undisturbed fulfilment. The names and careers of George, Francis, Leonard and Horace Darwin tell not only of the excellence of the Darwin-Wedgwood mixture, but also of the stimulating environment

¹ *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the 'Beagle'*, edited with an introduction by Nora Barlow. Pilot Press Ltd., 1945.

which Emma and Charles provided for their children. The young human animal is said to require two environmental qualities, important above all others, if it is to grow unimpeded to its full stature. These needs for affection and security were amply supplied at Down House. Here was economic sufficiency to a degree which makes the modern eye envious. Charles was never required to work for his living, for his father was a wealthy physician, his mother (who died when he was eight and a half years old) was a daughter of Josiah the First, and his wife was a daughter of Josiah the Second. Yet Charles' chronic anxiety made him troubled for the financial future of his children. He wrote to a friend: 'It makes me sick whenever I think of professions. All seem hopelessly bad, and as yet I cannot see a ray of light. I should very much like to talk over this (by the way my three bugbears are Californian and Australian gold, begging me by making my money at mortgage worth nothing; the French coming by the Westerham and Seven-oaks roads and therefore enclosing Down; and thirdly profession for my boys). . . . How paramount the future is to the present when one is surrounded by children. My dread is breeding ill-health; even death is better for them.' His children reacted as robustly against this whimsy of their father's as do the young of our generation against such forebodings.

While these family letters and memoirs¹ engender occasional envy in the modern reader, they cause him also a little discomfort in their unusual display of affection. Charles himself was the fount of this sentimentality. The family, although remarkably united in their love for their parents and for each other, inherited some of the Wedgwood phlegm, prosaic and practical, which did not take easily to outward display. Sir Francis Darwin wrote: 'He kept up his delightful affectionate manner towards us all his life. I sometimes wonder that he could do so, with such an undemonstrative race as we are; but I hope he knew how much we delighted in his loving words and manner.'

His daughter Henrietta wrote: 'I was more or less ill during

¹*The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, including an autobiographical chapter. Edited by his son Francis Darwin. 3 vols. 1887.

More Letters of Charles Darwin. Edited by Francis Darwin and A. C. Seward. 2 vols. 1903.

Emma Darwin: A Century of Family Letters. 2 vols. 1915.

A Group of Englishmen, 1795-1815. Eliza Meteyard. 1871.

the five years between thirteen and eighteen. . . . His patience and sympathy were endless during this weary illness and sometimes when most miserable I felt his sympathy to be almost too keen. . . . I can recall now how on his return I could hardly bear to have him in the room, the expression of tender sympathy and emotion on his face was too agitating.'

Charles' desire to love and to be loved was, in truth, a little more than normal. In 1866 Edward John Eyre, the Governor of Jamaica, had suppressed a Negro rising with prompt ruthlessness. England was divided in opinion over Eyre's action. Mill, Huxley, Spencer and Darwin were members of a committee which was agitating to prosecute Eyre for murder. When the public clamour was at its height, Charles and William, his eldest son, were dining with Erasmus Darwin in London. William, who did not share his father's hostility to Eyre, taunted the prosecuting committee with spending money on a banquet. Charles, very angry, told his son that the sooner he went back to pro-Eyre Southampton the better. Whereupon Charles lay awake all night, his anger turned to misery, wretchedly regretting his quarrel, and by seven o'clock the next morning he was in William's room, begging forgiveness.

Affection and security were provided in abundance at Down House, and many another quality beside. Here was discipline without restraint; reproof was rare and without anger. Charles' way of living allowed the children much of his time, and he was keenly interested in their activities without any interference in their private lives. He communicated to them his own interest in animals, plants, birds, stones and stars. Life was quiet, and living was plain, but there were frequent visits from other members of their large family and, later on, many distinguished guests paid their homage to Charles and stayed to luncheon. Illness cast the only shadow. An epidemic of scarlet fever, the long illness of Henrietta, an acute infection causing the death of beloved Annie, aged ten ('the joy of the household and the solace of our old age'), and, beyond all, the constant ill-health of Charles himself—these contributed the normal elements of that mischance which fortunately destroys complacency. There is no evidence that Charles' illness brought to his children anything but gain. As we have seen, it gave them more of his company, it ensured regular living and an ordered existence, and it asked from each of them those small daily services which are the necessary accompaniment of happy

communal living. Yet Charles' illness was a luxury allowable only to the rich, and had he been poor his ill-health would have been an environmental factor for his children of very different significance.

Charles' own boyhood at 'The Mount' provides an instructive contrast. Here was the same Darwin-Wedgwood endowment. Charles Robert Darwin, his father, was the son of the lively and distinguished Erasmus Darwin, while his mother, Susannah, was the daughter of the first Josiah Wedgwood. Susannah was married when she was thirty-three, and in the succeeding eleven years she produced six children. At the age of forty-one, ten years before her death, she lamented that 'everyone seems young but me'. The first two girls, Marianne and Caroline, were described by their aunt as 'children who are more rude and disagreeable than any I ever knew'. Of Marianne's character and happiness little more is recorded. Caroline emerged but slowly from her bad start, for when she was seventeen and Charles was nine, she became responsible for Charles' education, and he relates that, entering the room where she was awaiting him, he would stand outside the door asking himself, 'What will she blame me for now?' Susan, the third daughter, was a high-spirited beauty who sacrificed herself to look after her widowed father, and grew into a censorious and embittered spinster. Charles later received, with his customary mildness, her strictures on the running of his own household and the behaviour of his children. The personality of Catherine, the fourth daughter, was even more unsatisfactory. Robert claimed for her a 'great soul', but it was written of her that 'she achieved neither happiness for herself, nor for those with whom she lived'. Erasmus the elder brother ('poor dear old Ras') suffered from chronic inertia and lived his life in what Thomas Carlyle euphemistically called 'patient idleness'. Charles, the only other child, was the victim of a neurotic illness. The Darwin-Wedgwood union in Shrewsbury at the turn of the century had resulted in disagreeable children, unfulfilled daughters, neurotic sons; the same prescription a generation later at Downe was to produce a large family growing in unexceptionable happiness to remarkable fulfilment. Two conclusions may be safely drawn. The first, that the illness of Charles did not thwart the development of his children, and the second, that somewhere in the family circle at 'The Mount' was a damaging influence. Was

Susannah Wedgwood guilty? It is not possible to say that she was guiltless. Her two daughters who were 'rude and disagreeable' in early childhood behaved even more badly at 'The Mount'. This implies excessive indulgence in their upbringing, and the little we know of Susannah suggests a lack of robustness and an ailing incapacity which may have been responsible in part. The defects in the children's characters imply, however, a quite different set of environmental difficulties, and we should seek a repressive and awesome influence—a figure inculcating fear and restraint.

Charles Robert Darwin was such a personality. He practised in Shrewsbury with great professional success, and is said to have made more money than any physician outside London. Such success betokened in those days a dogmatic and authoritarian temper and a reputation for infallibility. Diagnosis rested exclusively in the operation of the senses and the use of one's faculties, and to have admitted fallibility would have struck at the roots of one's reputation. Robert was accounted a generous man in Shrewsbury, quick to help his friends and ready to relieve the unfortunate. He was kind to the poor, brusque with his peers, and rude in conflict with his betters. As he drove in his yellow chaise he 'sat as though carved in stone, as though looks were unnecessary to one whose treasury of knowledge and thought was alike inexhaustible', in this, differing from his father Erasmus, whose carriage was fitted with a table (and the first sunshine roof), and who, on his long journeys, spent his time reading and writing with remarkable vivacity. Robert's knowledge was far from 'inexhaustible', and the Royal Society rejected the first paper he submitted for his Fellowship; Erasmus assisted him at his next attempt, and a contribution on ocular spectra won for Robert the F.R.S.

Lady Barlow describes the atmosphere at 'The Mount' as 'formidable', and Robert as a 'very considerable tyrant'. These phrases are clearly not exaggerated as one weighs the evidence provided by the visiting Wedgwoods. All were glad to leave the house after a week's stay, for the air of restraint emanating from Robert became intolerable. Elizabeth Wedgwood, describing Sunday at 'The Mount', wrote: 'We dined at half past one, drest afterwards, and sat about three hours expecting the tide to come in about dark, and rather stiff and awful the evening was'. The 'tide', presumably, was Uncle Robert, who insisted on the

continuous entertainment of his guests. His contribution was a two-hour monologue before dinner; no replies were expected ('H'm, h'm, what is Emma saying?'), and as a rule none was ventured. Robert's tyranny set the style for the girls of the family, and Susannah's sister-in-law wrote that she was 'in subjection' to all the Darwins, even her favourite Susan imposed her will on her. The boys, however, were themselves in subjection, and even where their dearest wishes were thwarted (and in their full manhood) their acceptance of their father's authority was complete. There was no hint of outward revolt. Charles always spoke of his father in superlatives: 'the wisest man I ever knew', 'the best judge of character whom I ever knew', 'the kindest man I ever knew', 'the largest man whom I ever saw' (6 feet 2 inches, and 24 stone), 'his powers of observation and his sympathy, neither of which I have ever seen exceeded or even equalled'. Sir Francis Darwin wrote: 'his reverence for his father was boundless and most touching; he would have wished to judge everything else in the world dispassionately but anything his father said was received with almost implicit faith'.

The evidence, summarized here, satisfies me that Robert Darwin provided the disabling factor in his children's development, and if Susannah showed a lack of firmness in her handling of her children and in the management of her life, then I am ready to believe that she, too, was dominated and defeated by her tyrannical husband.

What effect did Robert have on the growing Charles? As the quotations above show, Charles spoke of his father, not as one grown man talks of another, but as a small boy regards his hero, or as the Christian worships his God. Here were absolute wisdom, unequalled charity, and unfailing omniscience demanding complete faith in the believer. Here, too, was the all-seeing eye, for on one occasion Charles had been secretly naughty and was abating his shame by an excessive display of affection, when his father suddenly ordered him to confess his fault. Charles always retained his fear of the god to whom one's hidden actions are revealed. It is not surprising, then, that the young Charles was timid. There is no evidence that he was physically fearful, but throughout his life he lacked courage in his personal relationships. His timidity was associated with his strong sense of guilt which, as the incident with Caroline shows, was well developed by the

age of nine. These guilt-feelings persisted, intensified as they were by his relations with his father, and they were undeniably crucial in the development of Charles.

Well-remembered pages in his *Autobiography* tell of his adolescent love of shooting and how, since his delight in it caused his father displeasure, he tried to justify his enthusiasm by pretending that it was in truth an intellectual interest, 'it required so much skill to judge where to find most game and to hunt the dogs well'. His father would not be impressed by such special pleading, for, as Charles wrote in a famous passage, 'to my deep mortification my father once said to me, "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs and rat-catching, and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family"'. The only comment in later years which he ever allowed himself on this outburst was, 'I think my father was a little unjust to me when I was young'.

It is apparent that this opinion of the god-like being whom he worshipped must have been profoundly disturbing to the young Charles, but at the time his course was not set and his father's contempt aggravated his shame without stimulating his ambition. He felt guilty, too, at Cambridge, 'my time was sadly wasted there and worse than wasted. From my passion for shooting and hunting, and when this failed, for riding across country, I got into a sporting set, including some dissipated low-minded young men. We used often to dine together in the evening, though those diners often included men of a higher stamp, and we sometimes drank too much, with jolly singing, and playing at cards afterwards. I know that I ought to feel ashamed of days and evenings thus spent, but as some of my friends were very pleasant, and we were all in the highest spirits, I cannot help looking back to those times with much pleasure.'

Sir Francis felt compelled to moderate the abandon of these confessions in a footnote, 'I gather from some of my father's contemporaries that he has exaggerated the Bacchanalian nature of these parties'. Robert saw him degenerating into 'an idle, sporting young man', and it was Charles' unconscious determination to reverse this condemnation that later acted as a main-spring for his ambition. Here was a conscience to be quieted, an opinion to be reversed, a god to be placated, and, it may be, an unconscious rival to be outstripped. Idleness and pleasure stood alike condemned, and the only satisfaction was to be found in

the single-minded and exclusive pursuit of his life's work. The overt and focal point of Darwin's inner conflict was thus determined by his father's displeasure and contempt.

For five years on the voyage of the *Beagle* his conflict was stilled by unremitting industry—idleness no doubt there was in some degree, but it was enforced and therefore not susceptible to condemnation. Pursuit of pleasure there was none, and the rare opportunity of recreation was gratefully accepted as an escape from the rigours of the ship and the long hours of boredom. He wrote to Susan from Brazil, on the last leg of his journey, 'both your letters were full of good news—especially the expressions which you tell me Professor Sedgwick used about my collections. I confess they are deeply gratifying. I trust one part at least will turn out true, and that I shall act—as I now think—that a man who dares waste one hour of time, has not discovered the value of life.'

This pledge was for a time faithfully fulfilled, for he describes the two years and three months that he spent as a bachelor in London after the conclusion of the *Beagle's* voyage as the most active time of his life, 'though I was occasionally unwell and so lost some time'. By contrast, he writes of the three years and eight months after his marriage, 'I did less scientific work, though I worked as hard as I possibly could, than during any other equal length of time in my life. This was owing to frequently occurring unwellness and to my long and serious illness.'

Since both the social round and scientific meetings made him ill he and his wife decided, in 1842, to leave London and take their two young babies to the country. He was thirty-three years old when he went to live at Down House, Downe, and he remained there till his death in 1882. For nearly forty years he lived a life of almost undeviating routine. He walked a little in the garden before breakfast, which meal he ate alone at 7.45. From 8 until 9.30 he worked. His letters were then read aloud to him as he lay on the sofa, and this was followed by novel-reading until 10.30. He worked again until 12 and then walked in the garden until lunch. After lunch he lay on the sofa in the dining-room reading the newspaper. All other reading, except scientific books and journals, was done aloud for him by some member of the family. He wrote letters until 3, when he moved to his bedroom sofa and a novel was read to him until 4, when

he again walked in the garden. This was followed by an hour's work, half-an-hour's complete idleness, and then the sofa again for an hour's novel-reading before dinner. At 8 he and his wife played two games of backgammon, followed by a little scientific reading, but soon, wearied of this, he returned to the dining-room while his wife refreshed him by her piano-playing. There was more novel-reading until he left the drawing-room at 10. His nights were restless and his sleep poor.

Four hours a day then sufficed for the most important scientific work of the century, but how did the man who a few years before dared not waste one hour of his time justify this sofa-lounging and novel-reading? Justification was provided by the chronic ill-health which descended on him after his marriage and which remained with him for forty years. Some friends suspected him of hypochondria, an occasional whisper was heard that he was 'shamming', but his family loyally accepted his illness, content to serve the distinguished husband and father who enriched their lives with his affection.

The nature of Darwin's illness is not in doubt. He suffered from a chronic malady which, in forty years, produced no objective sign of disease. He complained of a violent disorder of his stomach ('my accursed stomach'), of palpitation, of attacks of shivering with vomiting, of noises in the head, trembling of the hands, great weakness and sleeplessness. Excitement and emotion, whether pleasurable or painful, made him ill, while his scientific work made him forget his symptoms and drove away his discomforts. When he stopped work then his strength disappeared. The simplest social occasions were too much for him—after talking to his nephew for an hour he describes himself as 'ill half the night'—while little dinner-parties at Downe prostrated him. It is less surprising that occasions such as the wedding of his elder daughter made him so weak that 'he could hardly bear the fatigue of being present at the short service', and in November 1848, when his 'poor dear father died', he was so unwell that he was unable to travel to the funeral. He justified thus his refusal to read through the proofs of an essay of Hooker's (a great friend who had frequently rendered him the same service) by his illness: 'I had a terribly long fit of sickness yesterday, which makes the world rather extra gloomy today and I have an insanely strong wish to finish my accursed book'.

Well enough to pursue his own task but too unwell to help a friend, his ill-health fortified his conscience against the spectacle of human frailty in himself. While ordinary humankind excuses itself for its neglect of religion, philosophy, or art by a plea of lack of time, of capacity or enthusiasm, Charles Darwin was able to write to an American correspondent that 'the weakness arising from bad health prevented him from feeling equal to deep reflection, on the deepest subject which can fill a man's mind'. And the subject? Not natural science, not philosophy, but religion.

Through all this long illness his face held its ruddy colour and his expression showed no sign of the continual discomfort which he bore with uncomplaining patience. His wife 'never left him for a night. She shielded him from every avoidable annoyance, and omitted nothing that might save him trouble, or prevent him becoming overtired, or that might alleviate the many discomforts of his illness.' Charles suffered not from an organic disease but from an autonomic disorder. The autonomic nervous system provides the automatic control of the essential organs—heart, blood-vessels, intestines, skin, and so on. This control is automatic in order that it may be independent of the higher brain-centres which are thereby released for more important tasks. The autonomic nervous system performs its duty perfectly until its function is disturbed by emotion and conscious thought. Then it becomes the channel of a hundred ills—some of which were suffered by Charles Darwin. These sleeping devils, having been unnecessarily aroused, might be exorcised—in theory—by forgetting them once more, by ridding oneself of the noxious exciting emotion, by developing a Yogi-like control over the once-forgotten nervous system, or by substituting good thoughts for bad. It is not known why in some persons a suppressed or unrecognized emotion should produce a disturbance of behaviour or a defect in mind while in others it leads to a general autonomic disturbance, or to a specific physical disorder, such as asthma or duodenal ulcer. The path taken by this disabling impulse certainly depends on the individual constitution, compounded of inheritance and circumstance. Charles Darwin's illness, then, arose from the suppression and non-recognition of a painful emotion. Such an emotion is always compounded of fear, guilt, or hate—and it is painful because it conflicts with the inner image of himself which

each person carries. In the case of Charles Darwin this emotion arose from his relationship with his father—the adored god who had unjustly condemned him for idleness—and thereby created this obsessional urge for work and for achievement. Idleness and pleasure both exacerbated his feeling of guilt, work alone assuaged it. I believe Darwin's conflict became acute in London after his marriage because he realized that work was becoming impossible for him there—the social round, the scientific meetings, his growing family—all infringed his sacred task. I think, too, he realized in London that the need to be idle was, if not an essential part of his nature, an inescapable association of his methods of work. He was not a quick-witted, nor even a very intelligent man, and to plan his experiments, to formulate his theories, required long hours of brooding wakefulness. Rumination of this sort was only possible during the night, surrounded as he was in the day by his family, and its first consequence was the disturbance of his sleep. By the time morning came his day's work was half done, and by midday it was completed. As he went into the garden before lunch he would frequently say, 'I've done a good day's work'. After this he was ready for no more than mild recreation or escapist activity. Idleness was essential to him and yet idleness hypertrophied his guilt feelings; the dilemma was only evaded by a retreat into an illness which justified his idleness and put his environment into complete subjection to his life-work. His daily living, his wife's existence, his children's service, his character and his health, all these were ruthlessly and relentlessly conscripted to a single end. The personality of Charles Darwin resembled a biological monstrosity in whom a predominant character is developed, such as the fantastically elongated neck of the giraffe, to the eventual obliteration of all other qualities, in order that some essential and vital purpose may be served. He himself described the consequent slow atrophy of his æsthetic appreciation. The schoolboy who took an intense delight in Shakespeare grew into an old man who found Shakespeare nauseatingly dull; the young man who slipped a volume of Milton into his saddle-bag in his excursions from the *Beagle*, in middle-age found poetry unendurable. Such an enormity of impulse does not derive from the processes of conscious thought, it takes origin from profound, unrecognized and compelling emotion. Had Darwin planned the last forty

years of his life deliberately we should execrate him as a hypocrite and a villain, but he is saved from our condemnation, for he was unaware of the source of his strange illness and eccentric behaviour.

I have suggested that Robert's harsh opinion of Charles in adolescence provided the focal and growing point of the son's secret conflict. It is probable that his antagonism to his father was still more deeply rooted. Such a possibility is not excluded, indeed it is favoured, by his outward devotion to his father. It is common experience, as well as current psychological theory, that love and hate, subjection and revolt may flourish together in one person, for one object, and at one time. The antagonism between father and son is regarded as a natural phenomenon in the Freudian code, but if the Œdipus-situation is taken as universal then it must be admitted that the great majority of sons escape from it without hurt. If Darwin had hate in his heart for his father, then he swallowed this painful emotion hook, line and sinker. If he saw him, not only as a god to be propitiated, but as a jealous rival to be surpassed, he has hidden this dreadful vision from us.

The illness of Charles Darwin sprang from the same roots as his ambition; his ambition was served by his illness and was inextricably interlocked with it. To have cured Charles Darwin's illness would have both lessened his ambition and destroyed his way of achievement.

The nature of his achievement depended, no doubt, on his innate qualities—his patience, his love of theorizing, his ingenuity in experiment, his interest in natural phenomena—but the source, the extent and the volume of his achievement depended on an environmental circumstance—his unconscious determination to reverse his father's early opinion of him: 'Sedgwick called on my father, and said I should take a place among the leading scientific men. . . . After reading this letter I clambered over the mountains of Ascension with a bounding step, and made the volcanic rocks resound under my geological hammer.'

ANONYMOUS (*Eighteenth Century*)

MRS. WHITE

DURING the Southern Sung dynasty there lived in Black Pearl Lane, in Hangchow, a man called Hsü Hsüan. He was left an orphan at an early age, and had been put in the charge of his brother-in-law, a certain Li Jên, who was employed at the Governor's office. He lived in Li Jên's house, but during the day he helped in the management of a drugstore kept by his uncle, Merchant Li. He was only about twenty-one, but was generally regarded as thoroughly steady and reliable. The Ch'ing-ming Festival was at hand, and he decided to go to the Pao-t'a Temple and make offerings to his ancestors and burn some prayer-slips. The evening before, he talked the matter over with his sister. Next day he rose early, bought some paper horses, incense sticks, sutra-banners, paper cash, and the like, and as soon as he had breakfasted he changed into new clothes, put on his best socks and shoes, made up his prayer-strips, paper cash and horses into a neat bundle, and went straight to Merchant Li's shop.

'Uncle,' he said, 'I want to go to the Pao-t'a Temple and make offerings to my ancestors. I should be obliged if you would allow me a day's leave.'

'I am glad to see you showing a proper filial spirit,' said Merchant Li. 'By all means go at once, and come back at your own convenience.'

On leaving the shop, he made for the Ch'ien-t'ang Gate, crossed the Stone Coffin Bridge, and went straight up to the temple. Here he at once came upon the priest in charge of offerings, who dispatched his prayer-slips with the correct ritual, burnt his paper offerings, and came with him to the Great Hall. After admiring its beauties, he had some refreshments in the Guest Chamber and parted from the priest who had officiated for him. It seemed a pity not to take advantage of his holiday, and he set out to have a thorough look round. He had just reached the Shrine of the Four Sages when, quite unexpectedly, clouds came up from the north-west, a fog closed in to the south-east, and soon a slight drizzle began to fall. It did not at first look as though it would last very long. But one shower followed another, and soon it became a

steady downpour. Seeing that it was getting very wet underfoot, Hsü Hsüan decided that it would be a mistake to wait any longer, and taking off his new shoes and socks he made them into a bundle which he tied to his belt, and went barefoot to the quay at the Hall of the Four Sages to look for a boat. The river seemed at first to be completely deserted, and he was beginning to be afraid that he would not be able to cross, when he suddenly saw an old man sculling a boat close inshore, almost under his very nose, and at the first glance he recognized Chang A-kung, a boatman whom he knew very well indeed. Much relieved, he called out: 'Chang A-kung, take me to the Yung-chin Gate!'

The old man brought the boat alongside, and, seeing that it was Hsü Hsüan, he said: 'You've been caught in the rain, young master! Make haste and come aboard.'

Hsü Hsüan was already in the boat, and the old man had sculled him something like twenty yards from the shore when someone called out from the river bank, 'Take us, too!'

Hsü looked up and saw that the people who wished to become passengers were a lady dressed in white widow's weeds and her girl attendant, who was dressed in green and was carrying a bundle. When the boatman saw them, he paddled the boat back inshore and said:

'I suppose it's the same thing with you—you've been to the tombs and got caught in the rain. Well, look sharp and get on board!'

As soon as the lady and her companion were in the boat, they greeted Hsü very respectfully. He jumped to his feet, returned the salutation, and then stood aside, saying: 'Madam, pray take a seat under the awning'. When she had settled herself under the awning, the lady kept on stealing quick glances at Hsü, her eyes dancing like autumn waves. Steady young man though he was, it could hardly be expected that the sight of this extremely good-looking lady, accompanied by her very elegant maid, should not produce some effect upon him. He was just wondering whether he might venture to start a conversation and had decided not to, when to his surprise she addressed him first, asking him to tell her his name and surname. Then she asked where he lived, and he told her how he lived with his relations and worked in the druggist's shop. Presently, when opportunity offered, he said he would esteem it a great favour if she would confide to him the name of her distinguished family and indicate their place of residence.

'I am the sister', she said, 'of Captain White and Chamberlain White. I was married to a Mr. Ch'i, but unfortunately he died. He is buried not far from here, and as today is the Ch'ing-ming Festival, I have just been visiting his tomb, to make offerings and clear the ground. I was on my way back when this sudden storm came on, and if I had not been so fortunate as to get a lift in your Worship's boat, I should indeed have been in a quandary.'

This led to further trifling talk, and they were quite surprised suddenly to discover that the boat had reached the Yung-chin Gate. They were about to disembark when a look of embarrassment came into the lady's face.

'We made a very early start', the maid explained to Hsü, 'and were in such a hurry that we forgot to bring any small change with us. I wonder if you would mind paying the boatman? We will return the money when we get home. You may be sure we shall not fail to pay our debt.'

'Oh pray, ladies, at your convenience,' said Hsü. 'So small a matter is of no consequence at all.' So saying, he paid off the boatman and they all went on shore. It was still raining hard, and as it was getting late they set out at a good pace.

'I live at the end of the Lane of the Two Tea Stores,' the lady said to Hsü. 'If it is not troubling you too much, perhaps you would consent to come home with me and have a cup of tea. Then I could give you the boat money at the same time.'

'I am afraid I must be getting home,' he said. 'It is very late already. But some other time I should be happy to pay my respects.'

At this the lady and her maid immediately left him and set out into the rain. Hsü, keeping as far as possible under the eaves of houses, made his way to the house of some relatives who lived at the Three Bridges, in order to borrow an umbrella. He was just coming out on to the Yang Embankment, under the shelter of the umbrella, when he heard someone call out: 'Mr. Hsü, not so fast!' He glanced hurriedly over his shoulder and saw that it was the lady whom he had taken into his boat. She was standing all alone under the projecting eaves of a tea store.

'How comes it, Madam,' he said, 'that you have got no further than this?'

'As the rain showed no sign of stopping,' the lady said, 'and my shoes were wet through, I told Little Green to go home and fetch me an umbrella and something fresh to wear on my feet. I don't

know what has become of her. Might I walk a few paces with you under your umbrella?’

‘I have only a very short way to go,’ he said. ‘You had better take the umbrella. I will fetch it tomorrow.’

‘That is really very kind of you,’ she said, ‘but I feel I ought not to do that.’

However, he handed her the umbrella and went off, keeping under shelter as far as possible. On reaching home, he had supper and went to bed immediately. Here he lay tossing from side to side. He could not stop thinking about the lady of the boat, with whom he had fallen very much in love, and when at last he managed to snatch a moment’s sleep, it was only to dream of her. Things were going very well, and indeed just reaching a climax, when he woke with a start, to hear ‘the golden cock thrice crow’.

When it was light he got up and went to the shop. He made a pretence of attending to business; but it was as though his mind and soul were all the while elsewhere and nothing he did went right. The moment he had eaten his dinner, he said something about having to go on an errand in the town, and rushed out. He made straight for the end of the Lane of the Two Tea Stores, and began to inquire for Mrs. White. No one had ever heard of her. He was wandering vaguely about, when Little Green came running towards him from the east.

‘Sister,’ he said, ‘where is it that you live? I have come to fetch my umbrella.’

‘Follow me, Sir,’ she said. She took him with her and they had not walked far when she said, ‘It’s just in here’. Hsü looked about to get his bearings and saw that it was a high building, opposite the wall of Prince Hsiu’s residence.

‘Please come inside and take a seat,’ said Little Green when they had passed through the gate. He followed her into the central hall. In a low voice, going towards the inner room, she said, ‘Madame, Mr. Hsü is here’. She answered from within, ‘Ask him to come in and have a cup of tea’.

Hsü hesitated for a while, very uncertain whether it was proper for him to accept such an invitation. But Little Green kept on urging him to consent. ‘What’s the objection?’ she said. ‘Go right in.’

He went into the inner room which on each side had four blind windows of lattice-work, while in the middle there hung

a curtain of green cloth. He pushed back the curtain and found behind it an alcove with a table on which was a vase of Tiger Beard Irises, four very good pictures on the walls, between which there hung right in the centre a painting of some deity. On the incense-stand were ranged some old copper incense-burners and flower vases.

Mrs. White met him with the warmest greetings. 'It was entirely owing to you that I came to no harm when I got caught in the rain yesterday,' she said. 'I cannot thank you enough.'

'Please say no more about it,' said Hsü. 'Such a trifling matter is really not worth mentioning.'

When tea had been served, he rose to go; but at that moment Little Green came in with wine, fish, fruit and so on. He hastened to excuse himself, saying, 'Thank you very much indeed, Madam, for this kind thought, but I really ought not to put you to so much trouble'. He drank a cup or two of wine and then rose saying, 'It is getting very late. I must be going.'

'I know that this meagre repast is a poor inducement to stay, and I am only venturing to detain you', she said, 'because last night I was obliged to lend your umbrella to a relative. I must beg you to stay and drink a few more cups of wine while the umbrella is being fetched.'

'I am afraid I cannot wait,' he said. 'It is very late.'

'I am sorry you cannot wait for the umbrella,' the lady said. 'All I can do is to suggest that you should come and get it tomorrow.'

'By all means,' he said, 'by all means!' And with that he thanked her and went away.

Next day he again made a feeble pretence of attending to business, but his impatience soon became more than he could endure and, inventing a story about some business that he must attend to, he stole off to Mrs. White's house to fetch the umbrella. Noting how early he had come, she again had wine served and begged him to stay and drink a cup or two.

'I don't like to see you putting yourself out so much,' said Hsü, 'just because I lent you a tattered umbrella.'

'I am only asking you to have a friendly drink,' she said. 'It has nothing to do with the umbrella. Just drink one cup; there is something I want to discuss with you.'

He drank several cups and then said, 'What is it, Madam, that you want to discuss with me?'

Thus questioned, Mrs. White poured out another cup, set it in front of Hsü with her own hand and said, 'You may be sure that in your honoured presence and with the eyes of that holy image upon me' (and here she pointed to the picture on the wall), 'I should not dare to speak anything but the truth. Since my husband died, I have been quite alone in the world. It seems that Fate was reserving me for you. Why else should we at the very first glance in the boat two days ago have felt so deep an attraction for one another? If I am not wrong in thinking that you love me distractedly, why do you not find a good match-maker and arrange for a lifetime of wedded bliss?'

Hsü, when he heard this, was overwhelmed with joy; but on reflection he saw that, working as he did in Merchant Li's shop and having no proper home of his own, he was really in no position to set up as a married man. Seeing him ponder deeply and make no reply, she said, 'I entreat you to say frankly whatever is in your mind. What is it that makes you hesitate to reply?'

'Madam,' he said, 'that you should honour me with your affection cannot fail to move me deeply. But I am only an employee in very straitened and humble circumstances, and on thinking over the matter carefully, I do not see how I can accept this proposal.'

'Well, if you don't want to marry me,' said Mrs. White, 'there is no use in your trying to force yourself into it. But if what you have just mentioned is the only difficulty, I have ample means, and you have no need to worry on that score. Bring me some money,' she called out to Little Green, who went into an inner room and brought back with her a packet which she handed to her mistress. Mrs. White, without looking at it, passed it straight on to Hsü, saying as she did so, 'Take this to meet your expenses for the moment. If you find you want more, you have only to come and ask for it.'

He received the packet respectfully, in both hands, opened it and saw at the first glance that it contained a fifty-tael silver ingot. At the sight of it his whole face lit up with pleasure. He put it carefully in his sleeve, saying, 'As soon as I have made all the necessary arrangements, I will come back and inform you'. Then he rose and took his leave. Just as he was going Little Green appeared with the umbrella.

He went straight home and put the money in a safe place.

Then he brought back the umbrella to the people he had borrowed it from and afterwards went straight to bed. Next day he got up early and taking some small silver change of his own he bought some chicken, goose, fish, meat and so on, as well as various kinds of fruit and a jar of good wine, and invited his brother-in-law and sister to dine with him. The invitation came as a great surprise to Secretary Li.

'What has suddenly made you decide to throw away your money like this?' he inquired.

'There is a matter about which I want you both to give me your help,' Hsü replied.

'In that case,' said Li, 'you had better tell us all about it at once.'

'Let's drink a cup or two first,' said Hsü.

When they had all taken their seats in due order of precedence and had a drink, Li began to question him again.

'I cannot thank you and my sister enough for taking charge of me and bringing me up,' said Hsü in reply. 'I am now thinking of getting married. The match is from my point of view a very suitable one, the lady has indicated that my chances are good and it should be possible to arrange the affair without much effort. But my parents are dead, and I shall have to ask you and my sister to sponsor me in this matter.'

The first thing that Secretary Li and his wife thought of when they heard this was that they would certainly have to pay the expenses of the wedding, and they answered coldly:

'A marriage is a big matter. We should prefer to discuss your plan together quietly before giving you an answer. For the moment let us go on with the wine.'

They finished the wine and the party broke up without any further allusion to Hsü's proposal.

Some days later, as nothing more had transpired, he said to his sister, 'Have you and your husband discussed that affair yet?'

'No, it has not been mentioned at all,' she said.

'Why hasn't it been discussed?' he asked.

'He's been so harassed by business ever since', she said, 'that I haven't liked to raise the question.'

'I quite understand why it is that you are not in a hurry to talk about it,' said Hsü. 'You are afraid that I shall ask you to pay.'

So saying, he fished out the silver ingot from his sleeve and handed it to her, saying: 'I can deal with the expenses. All I ask is that you should act as my sponsors.'

'Well,' she said, laughing, 'if you can do yourself as well as that out of the proceeds of our uncle's shop, no wonder you are thinking of making a stylish marriage. I'll keep the money here and talk to your brother-in-law when he comes in. I am sure it will be all right.'

Not long afterwards Secretary Li came home, and she showed him the money, saying, 'He's got the money for his wedding. He only wants us to sponsor it. I don't see why we shouldn't do that at once.'

Secretary Li took the ingot, turned it over and over, carefully examined the lettering with which it was inscribed, and cried out all of a sudden: 'The worst has happened! This ingot may well bring ruin upon our whole family.'

'I never heard such nonsense,' said his wife. 'How can a single piece of silver do all that harm?'

'You don't understand,' said Secretary Li. 'Fifty silver ingots have just disappeared from Commander Shao's strong-room without the seals or locks being so much as touched. The prefect of Lin-an has been made responsible for the arrest of the thief and there is a tremendous hue and cry. So far, the prefect has not found any clue, and he has put up a notice authorizing the arrest at sight of anyone found in possession of this money. The list gives particulars of the marks and numbers of the ingots. A reward of fifty taels will be given for the arrest of the thief. Anyone withholding information or giving shelter to the criminal will be sent with his whole family to do military service on the frontiers. This ingot you have shown me has the markings described in the notice. If we hide it away and do not report to the prefecture, sooner or later someone will denounce us and we shall get into trouble.'

When the wife heard this, she was so scared that she shook till her bones rattled. 'We can't be sure', she said, 'whether he really stole it or only got it from someone else. What ought we to do about it?'

'It's no business of ours whether he stole it or borrowed it,' said Li. 'It's he who must take the consequences of his own actions. There's no reason why the whole family should be

ruined.' So saying, he took the ingot to the prefecture and denounced Hsü Hsüan. The Governor of Lin-an, having verified that this was indeed one of the missing ingots, at once sent his men to arrest the criminal. Soon afterwards Hsü arrived, under arrest, at the Governor's Court. Governor Han addressed him in a loud voice:

'Fifty ingots have disappeared from Commander Shao's strong-room without disturbance either of seals or locks. A denunciation has been made by Secretary Li, and I have one of the ingots here in Court. It appears that it was found in your possession. That being so, where are the remaining forty-nine? As the theft was committed without disturbance of seal or lock, this is a case not only of theft, but also of sorcery. Your best course will be to make a straightforward confession.'

So saying, he ordered his men to get ready the screw and rack and other instruments of torture.

On discovering for the first time why he had been arrested, Hsü hastened to explain matters. 'I am not a sorcerer,' he said. 'Let me tell you exactly what happened.' And he told the whole story of his meeting with Mrs. White in the boat, how she had borrowed his umbrella and he had gone to reclaim it, and how she had invited him to drink with her, proposed marriage and lent him the money.

'Who is this Mrs. White?' the Governor asked, 'and where is she to be found?'

'She told me', said Hsü, 'that she is the sister of Captain White and Chamberlain White. She is living at the entry to the Lane of the Two Tea Stores, in a high, black-painted house standing well above the highway, opposite the wall of Prince Hsiu's residence.'

Governor Han then instructed his constable Ho Li to take Hsü Hsüan to the Lane of the Two Tea Stores, arrest 'the female delinquent, White', and bring her into Court for interrogation. Ho, accompanied by a workman, then conducted Hsü to the tall, black-painted house that had been described. It was obvious at the first glance that it was uninhabited and had been so for some time. He detained and questioned the local beadle and the near neighbours of the house. They all told the same story: Deputy Magistrate Mao had once lived there, but about six years ago he and his whole family died of the plague and since then, as a ghos

had frequently been seen going in and out of the house with a shopping basket, no one had dared to live there. As for a Mrs. White—there was no one in the district of that name.

‘It’s clear she doesn’t live here,’ said Ho Li. ‘Are you sure you haven’t made a mistake?’

‘I am quite certain this is the house,’ said Hsü, who was utterly bewildered by the sight before him. ‘What I cannot understand is how the house has come to look so derelict in the space of only three or four days.’

‘Well,’ said Ho Li, ‘if you are sure this is the right place, the only thing we can do is to force the gate and go in.’

So saying, he told the beadle to get to work. The gate was forced and they all pressed in. The interior was dark and cold; not a soul was to be seen. They broke into one room after another on every floor; nowhere was the slightest trace of anyone having set foot there. At last, when they opened the door of a room at the very top of the house, they saw at the far end of the room the figure of a strikingly handsome woman dressed all in white, sitting on a low couch. Uncertain whether it was a live person or a ghost, they all stood rooted to the spot. Only Ho Li, mindful of his mission, found strength to cry in a loud voice: ‘Mrs. White, I presume! I have here a warrant signed by his Excellency Governor Han authorizing me to bring you for interrogation about an affair of money, in which the man Hsü Hsüan is also involved.’

The lady neither stirred nor uttered a word of reply.

The constable saw nothing for it but to pluck up his courage and herd the whole crowd into the room. They were all pressing forward when there was a sudden crash, like a thunder-clap out of the blue. They were so startled that the whole crowd fell over one another in a heap. But nothing more occurred and when they had recovered from their fright they began again to edge forward towards the couch. As they approached, a dazzling shimmer met their eyes. Piled up high on the couch was a great heap of silver; the lady was nowhere to be seen. They counted it and found that there were exactly forty-nine ingots. Ho Li then told the people to divide the bars between them, carry them to the court-room and hand them in one by one. When he had made a detailed report of all that had occurred, Governor Han at once discharged the beadle and neighbours.

'It is evident', he said, 'from what I have just heard that this is a case of sorcery, in which none of these witnesses are involved.'

Hsü Hsüan, however, was found guilty of handling stolen goods and was sentenced to confinement in the Penal Camp at Soochow. The missing money was duly returned in full to Commander Shao, who handed over the promised reward of fifty taels to Secretary Li. The case was then closed, but Secretary Li, having got fifty taels by denouncing Hsü Hsüan and seeing that his denunciation had landed Hsü in the Penal Camp, did not feel quite easy in his mind and gave the whole reward to Hsü for his travelling expenses. He also got Merchant Li to give Hsü letters to two acquaintances in Soochow, one of them a magistrate's clerk called Director Fan, and the other a Mr. Wang, who kept an inn near the Chi-li Bridge.

Weeping bitterly, Hsü parted from his sister and brother-in-law and in company with his police-escort took boat to Soochow and arrived at the Penal Camp. He soon managed to get his two letters delivered to Director Fan and Mr. Wang. They both exerted themselves on his behalf and, by laying out a certain amount of money in high places and low, they procured a certificate that he had been duly incarcerated and gave it to the escort, who went away satisfied. Hsü, without having had to suffer the least hardship or discomfort, settled in at Mr. Wang's. Here he sat alone all day, very disconsolate.

He had been at Soochow for half a year and was getting very tired of his solitary existence, when suddenly one day Mr. Wang, the innkeeper, came to him and said: 'There is a carrying-chair outside, with a young lady in it, attended by her maid. They are asking for you.'

Hsü was astonished. He could not imagine who would be likely to call upon him. He hurried to the gate and found to his surprise that it was Mrs. White and Little Green. The mere sight of them put him into such a rage that he could hardly stand upon his feet.

'Tormentress!' he cried, 'you have done me deadly injury. By stealing public money for me, you got me into a desperate plight and brought upon me all the rigours of the law. And now you follow me to Soochow! What brings you here, I should like to ask?'

'Dear one,' she said, 'it is all a mistake. You must not be angry with me. I have come on purpose to explain it all to you.'

At this point, Mr. Wang, who was afraid people would be shocked if they saw the two of them having out their say in this public way, outside the inn gate, came out and said to Mrs. White: 'If you have come on purpose to see Mr. Hsü about something, wouldn't you rather come inside and have a talk?'

Mrs. White at once made as though to walk straight in, but Hsü barred her path, saying: 'No, no, she is an evil spirit, not a woman. You must not let her in.'

The innkeeper turned an astonished gaze upon Mrs. White, examined her attentively from head to foot and then burst out laughing. 'Oh, come!' he said, 'Where in the world was there ever an evil spirit that looked in the least like this? You have no right to say such things about people. It's quite all right, Madam, please come straight in.'

Mrs. White walked boldly in, was presented to the innkeeper's wife, and then said to Hsü: 'From the moment I yielded myself to you, you became my husband and master. How could I possibly have intended to bring harm upon you? If I gave you money, it was because I loved you. How could I know that it would get you into trouble? If there is anything wrong about where the money came from, that is my late husband's fault; for I got it from him. It is not a woman's business to know anything about such things. Yes, a woman, not an evil spirit! That is an absurd delusion that has come into your head because you have a grudge against me. It is to clear all this up that I came here today. I am quite prepared to go away. . . .'

'Enough of this!' cried Hsü. 'When the constable came to arrest you, I distinctly saw you sitting on the couch. Then there was a loud crash, and when I looked again you had disappeared. Human beings cannot vanish in that way. You are certainly an evil spirit.'

At this she laughed. 'The bang you heard,' she said, 'was Little Green knocking the big bamboo pole against the panelling, to bring the dust down. But it gave the people such a fright—I suppose they thought the place was haunted, for they all seemed scared out of their wits—that after a while I retired behind the curtains at the back of the couch, just to give them a chance to recover from their fright. However, they were much too afraid

to look for me, and as soon as they caught sight of the money, they could think of nothing else. When they went away, I thought I had better go into hiding for a while, and I went to my mother's sister, who lives opposite the Flower Treasure Temple. In the end I heard quite by chance that you had been sent here. So I put together a few things and came to see you and to ask what is going to happen about our wedding. However, as you have got it into your head that I am an evil spirit, the sooner I go away the better.' So saying, she rose, and made towards the door.

But the innkeeper and his wife would not hear of her going. 'What, go straight back, after coming all this way!' they exclaimed. 'You'll surely stay with us just for a night or two?'

Mrs. White was beginning to explain that it was out of the question when Little Green broke in:

'I am sure it is very kind of our host to be so pressing. Don't you think, Madam, we might stay just a night or two, so as to have time to talk things over. You mustn't forget that some time ago you *did* agree to marry Mr. Hsü, and it's rather difficult for you now to take up such a stiff attitude towards him.'

'Mercy on me, or I'll die of shame,' rejoined Mrs. White. 'How can I, a lone female, possibly think of remaining under this roof?'

'If you really did once agree to marry him,' said the innkeeper's wife, 'I am sure you wouldn't want to go back on your word. You couldn't do better than look at the calendar to see which would be a lucky day, and have your wedding here.'

Hsü had been absolutely convinced that she was an evil spirit. But she completely cleared up every suspicious point in so convincing a way that in the end he could only suppose he had done her an injustice. Moreover, her great beauty could not fail to have some effect upon him. It was not long before he yielded to the persuasion of the innkeeper and his wife and agreed to the marriage. Mrs. White's purse seemed well supplied and they were both able to have a very good time. After their marriage her subtle and bewitching ways cast such a spell upon him that he was completely bemused. She seemed to him like an enchanted being from a happier world, and he only regretted that their marriage had so long been delayed.

Time passed quickly; they had been married for six months when one day in the middle of the second month Hsü went with

some friends to look at the image of Buddha's Nirvana in the Nirvana Temple. At the gate of the temple he saw a Taoist selling herbs and distributing charms. For no particular reason Hsü went and watched him at his work. On catching sight of Hsü, the Taoist at once exclaimed in great consternation: 'Sir, there is a dark exhalation rising from the top of your head. It is certain that you are in the toils of an evil spirit, who has already done you great injury. You had better take care.'

All Hsü's former suspicions were at once revived. He fell upon his knees and begged the priest to save him. The Taoist then gave him two charms, telling him to burn one at the third watch and keep the other hidden in his hair. As soon as he reached home Hsü secretly hid the first charm in his hair and kept the other ready to burn when the third watch sounded. He was waiting for the hour to come, when Mrs. White suddenly heaved a deep sigh:

'To think that though we have lived together as man and wife all these months,' she said, 'you should have no trust in me at all, but only believe the evils that others say of me! At midnight, at the third watch, you mean to burn a charm and bedevil me. Well, burn your charm, and we shall see!'

Thus exposed, Hsü did not for the moment feel at all like carrying out his intention. But Mrs. White snatched the charm from him and taking it to the lamp she burnt it herself. The burning of the charm did not produce the slightest effect upon her, and she said, laughing: 'What about that? If I were a spirit, it would surely have made me appear in my true form.'

'It was not my idea,' said Hsü. 'At the temple I met an itinerant Taoist, who assured me that you were an evil spirit.'

'Very well then,' said Mrs. White. 'If he says I'm an evil spirit, let us go to him tomorrow and ask him to change me into my true form. Then you will know where you are.'

Next day they left Little Green in charge of their things and went off together to the temple. When they got there, the Taoist was in the act of handing round his charms, and he was surrounded by a great throng. Mrs. White stepped up confidently to the fringe of the crowd and called out in a loud voice: 'You ignorant low mountebank, what do you understand about it! How dare you come here with your devil pictures and demon spells, deceiving all the people with your gibberish?'

The Taoist was very much taken aback by this sudden assault. At the first glance he saw that there was a strange look in the lady's face and knew that she was not what she appeared. 'I must warn you', he said, 'that the art I practice is the magic of the Five Thunders and the Heavenly Heart. By its virtue all monsters and evil spirits who swallow my charms at once show themselves in their true form. Being what you are, I hardly imagine you would care to try the experiment?'

'Let these people be witness,' said she, smiling. 'Write out a charm, and you shall see me swallow it.'

He hurriedly wrote a charm and gave it to her. Quite calmly she took it from him, scrunched it into a ball, put it in her mouth and, having been handed a drink of water, she swallowed the charm right down. Then she stood for a while with a smile on her face. Nothing whatever happened to her, and the on-lookers with one accord began to hurl abuse at the magician. 'Enough of your nonsense,' they cried. 'How dare you say that a fine, well-bred lady like this is an evil spirit?'

The Taoist, while they heaped abuse upon him, could only blink and gape. He had not a word to say.

'A miserable, strolling impostor like that, trying to take away the good name of a respectable married woman! The depths of Hell would be the proper place for him. But to spare the feelings of all you gentlemen, I will only give him a hanging.'

So saying, she muttered some kind of imprecation in a low voice and the Taoist immediately began to shrink into himself with his hands crossed in front of him, exactly as though he were being bound with a rope. Then he began gradually to leave the ground till he was hanging in mid-air, moaning and screaming all the while.

The astonished spectators acclaimed a miracle, and Hsü was so astounded that his wits almost forsook him.

'That will do for the present,' said Mrs. White. 'If it wasn't for knowing that the constable would butt in, I would gladly have let him stay there for a year.'

So saying, she blew gently in his direction and the Taoist at once sank to earth again. As soon as he recovered his footing he scampered off as fast as his legs would carry him, only wishing, as the saying goes, that his father and mother had not forgotten to provide his heels with wings. Soon he had vanished into the distance like a leaf whirled by the wind.

As for Hsü and Mrs. White, they went quietly home and continued to live much as they had done before this trouble arose between them.

Buddha's Birthday, the eighth day of the fourth month, came round and Hsü thought he would like to go to the Ch'êng-t'ien Temple and see the festival.

'I believe it's a wonderful sight,' said Mrs. White, and when the day came she put out new clothes for him to wear, and produced a gold-painted fan with a coral pendant, saying as she gave it to him, 'Come back in good time, or I shall be worried about you.'

He promised not to be away long, and decked out in all his finery he swaggered off to the temple, eager to join in the fun. When he got there, he became aware that some exciting piece of news was being passed from mouth to mouth. The gist of this confused babble of talk seemed to be that a certain Pawnbroker Chou, on visiting his strong-room, had found that a considerable quantity of jewelry and clothing was missing, and that a warrant was out for the arrest of the thief. Hsü paid no particular attention to this news and had soon mingled with the crowd of worshippers and pleasure-seekers of both sexes who had come there to make holiday. He little suspected that the eye of the detectives, who had noticed that his clothes and fan corresponded closely to those described on their list, was already upon him. Presently someone stepped up to him and said very politely:

'I wonder if you would mind letting me have a look at that fan?'

Suspecting nothing, Hsü handed him the fan. There was no doubt that it was one of the missing objects described on the official list. The detective at once shouted:

'This is your man! The fan he is carrying is on the list.'

Immediately a number of men sprang forward and bound Hsü fast with rope. He began trying to explain matters, but no one listened. The Governor's court happened to be in session and Hsü was brought for immediate trial.

'You were arrested', said the Governor, 'wearing clothes and carrying a fan that are described in a list of missing goods. Where are the jewelry and other valuables? A true confession on your part will save you from a thrashing.'

'The things I am wearing and the fan,' said Hsü, 'please your Worship, were given to me by my wife; I did not steal them. I beg your Worship to make a thorough investigation.'

'Nonsense!' said the Governor. 'The things correspond exactly to those described on the list, and it is no use trying to put it on to your wife. And where is your wife at present?'

'At Mr. Wang's inn, Sir,' said Hsü, 'at the Chi-li Bridge.'

The Governor then told his men to take Hsü to the inn, arrest the person whom he identified as his wife and bring her back for interrogation.

'What's all this about?' asked Mr. Wang, astonished to see his inn invaded by this crowd.

'Mrs. White has got me into trouble,' said Hsü, 'and they have come to arrest her.'

'She isn't here,' said the innkeeper. 'When you didn't come back from the temple, she and Little Green went there to look for you and never came home.'

When the police heard that Mrs. White was not there, they put the handcuffs on Mr. Wang instead and brought him back to court.

'A lady looking for her husband is not likely to be anywhere very far away,' said the Governor. 'I shall make Mr. Wang responsible for finding her. The defendant Hsü is to remain in custody till this Mrs. White can be produced. I will then go into the matter again and give judgement.'

Pawnbroker Chou was in court, listening to the proceedings, and suddenly at this moment one of his servants rushed up to him and announced that all the missing objects had been found, in an old, empty box in the gallery of the strong-room. The pawnbroker went home and found that everything was there, except the fan with the coral pendant.

'It's clear it wouldn't be fair to convict him only on the score of the fan,' said the pawnbroker. 'There might be another just like it.'

He went back to the Governor's office and privately informed the official in charge of the matter that a fresh situation had arisen, and asked that Hsü might be released. The case was therefore not proceeded with; but it was decided that Hsü was 'unsuited to the locality' and he was 're-allocated' to Chên-chiang.

It so happened that just when he was about to start, Commander Shao sent Secretary Li to do some business for him at Soochow. Li remembered about Hsü and hurried to Wang's inn to see what had become of him. Hearing that he was being moved to Chên-chiang, he said to Hsü:

'I have an old friend at Chên-chiang, who allows me to call him "uncle". His name is Li K'o-yung and he keeps a drug-store near the Needle Bridge. I'll give you a letter for him. You'd be very well off at his place.'

Hsü took the letter and in a few days arrived with his escort at Chên-chiang. They went straight to Li K'o-yung's house, and he delivered the letter, saying:

'I am the brother-in-law of Secretary Li at Hangchow. I have a letter from him here in which he asks you to do what you can for me.'

Li K'o-yung read the letter and at once asked two of the officials who were in charge of Hsü to come in and have something to eat, while at the same time he asked those who were still on duty to come with him and Hsü to the Governor's office, to clear their papers. Here, by a discreet outlay of money, he obtained permission for Hsü to lodge with him, provided that he stood security, and came home. The escort obtained their certificate, and went away. When Hsü got back, he fell on his knees and heartily thanked K'o-yung. The letter had mentioned that Hsü had worked as overseer in a drug-shop, and K'o-yung asked him to stay and work for a time in his own shop.

After watching him for several days, he saw that he understood the business thoroughly and was quite delighted with him. Hsü was afraid that the other assistants might resent his intrusion, so he invited them all to have a drink in a wine-shop, just to get on friendly terms with them. When the party had broken up and Hsü paid the bill and gone out into the street, he became aware that he was a little unsteady on his legs and, fearing that he might bump into people, he was careful to walk well to the side of the road, right under the eaves of the houses, watching his step all the while. Suddenly an upper window was flung open and someone emptied out some water, which only just missed him. Hsü halted.

'A nice wife you'd be to have about the place!' he shouted. 'Haven't you got any eyes in your head?'

The woman came running downstairs. 'Don't scold me!' she said. 'I didn't do it on purpose.'

He looked up, and who should it be but Mrs. White! Hsü burst into a terrible rage.

'Thief, sorceress,' he screamed, 'how many more times do you intend to be the undoing of me? Already you have put me twice in dock on a criminal charge. So this is where you came to hide when you disappeared from Soochow!' So saying, he rushed forward and seized her, crying: 'This time, believe me, matters are not going to be settled out of court!'

'You know the saying,' she answered smiling, "'one night as man and wife: a hundred nights' pardon". There's no need to be so hasty. Just let me explain matters to you, and if you think I acted wrongly, be as angry as you please! The clothes and fan I gave you that day all belonged to my late husband, and were honestly come by. It was only because I loved you so dearly that I wanted you to wear them. How could I have foreseen that they would be wrongly identified? That was fated in your horoscope; it was no fault of mine.'

'How was it', asked Hsü, 'that when I came back to look for you at the inn, you were not to be seen, and have now turned up here?'

'When I went to look for you at the temple,' said she, 'I heard that you had been arrested. I felt certain that I should be implicated and, anxious to preserve my good name, I made Little Green hire a small boat and came here to stay with my mother's brother till I got further news of you: That was only my duty. I married you, and "am yours till death and after". Never would I dream of running away from you. And now that we have had the good fortune to meet again, no matter how great the difficulties, I do not mean to send you away.'

She went on coaxing and cajoling him till he was completely won over and the rage that at first had filled his whole heart entirely subsided.

'So you have been looking for me ever since you came to live here?' he said at last.

'Who else should I be looking for?' she said. 'But come upstairs.'

He trailed upstairs after her, in a state of abject collapse.

He spent the night there. They were again on the most

affectionate terms; presently he moved his belongings and they lived as man and wife exactly as before. On Li K'o-yung the apothecary's birthday they bought some candles, pastries, handkerchiefs and other small presents and went to his house to congratulate him. They found that he had set out mats and was entertaining his friends and relations with wine.

Now Li K'o-yung was of a very amorous disposition. He noticed at once that Mrs. White was uncommonly good looking, and he kept on stealing covert glances at her. After a time, Mrs. White wanted to retire for a moment and the children's nurse was told to show her where to go. Li K'o-yung slipped into a corner and, waiting till Mrs. White was in the back-yard, he tip-toed after her and peered through a chink in the door. What he saw was very different from what he expected. Here was no lady 'fair as flower or jade', but a huge white snake, stout as a well-bucket, lying coiled upon the privy. Its eyes, like two great lamps, blazed with a golden light. Li K'o-yung was scared to death. He rushed away, and had just turned the corner when his legs gave way beneath him and he lay unconscious on the ground, with green face and purple lips. Here he was found by the nurse, who told Li K'o-yung's old mother. She and the manager of the drug-store administered a dose of life restorer, and he began to come round. The old lady at once asked what had been the cause of the attack. He was, of course, unable to give the real reason, and only said:

'I have been out of sorts for several days and suddenly felt a bit dizzy. But please don't let me spoil the party.'

When the guests had taken their leave, Mrs. White reappeared. Being afraid that when they were together in the shop, Li K'o-yung would tell Hsü what he had seen, she thought out a plan, and in accordance with it she sighed heavily.

'A party of this kind is surely a cheerful occasion,' said Hsü. 'Why are you sighing?'

'I hardly like to tell you,' she said. 'You have always told me that this Li K'o-yung was a nice old man. It's all a pretence on his part. Would you believe it, when he saw me get up to leave the room, he slipped round behind me and tried to seduce me! He tore open my dress and started fondling me. I began to scream, but then I thought of all those people sitting inside and did not like to put him publicly to shame. So I threw him to the

ground and managed to slip away. But I had such a fright, I don't know how I shall ever work it off.'

'Well,' said Hsü, 'he doesn't seem to have done any real harm, and as he is my master, there is nothing we can do except put up with it. But you had better not go there again.'

'I've still got twenty or thirty taels of silver put away,' she said. 'As things are, why don't you part from him, and set up a small drug-shop of your own on the quays? Wouldn't you rather be your own master?'

'All right,' said Hsü, and went off to discuss the matter with Li K'o-yung, who, having had this fright, was not at all anxious to keep him.

The new shop was a great success and business improved every day. The seventh of the seventh month came round, which the people keep as the Dragon King's Birthday. Hsü wanted to go and burn incense, but Mrs. White was very much against it. Seeing that he had quite made up his mind, she said at last:

'Well, if you must go, keep to the big halls in front and at the back of the temple. Whatever you do, don't go into the priest's cells, chatting with those baldheads, or they will be pestering you for alms.'

'I won't if you don't want me to,' he said. 'Just as you please!'

He went to the river, took a boat and made straight for the Temple of the Golden Hill. He went first to the Hall of the Dragon King and burnt incense, and then strolled about, just to have a look round. Without thinking what he was doing, he wandered into the priests' quarters. He saw a number of priests gathered together round someone who was apparently preaching a sermon. He had no sooner set foot there than he remembered his wife's injunction and beat a hasty retreat. But the preacher had already noticed him and, remarking to his hearers, 'There is a very bedevilled look in that man's face,' he asked one of his attendants to tell Hsü that he should like to have a word with him. By the time the attendant reached the doorway, Hsü had already left. Seeing that the visitor was giving them the slip, the preacher picked up his Meditation Staff and himself set out in pursuit. When he reached the terrace in front of the temple he saw that a great crowd of people who wanted to cross the river were standing at the gate, waiting for a heavy gale to subside. Suddenly,

in the very heart of the stream, he saw a small boat flying through the waves at a tremendous speed.

'Look at that little boat!' the people cried out in astonishment. Fancy it putting out in a storm like this! And what a pace it's going at, too!

Hsü, who was standing in the middle of the crowd, stretched himself in order to see over the heads of the people. To his surprise he saw that the two figures standing in the prow of the little boat were Mrs. White and Little Green. He was about, in his amazement, to ask them why they had come, when Mrs. White called out to him from afar:

'Husband, there is a high wind, so we thought we had better come to fetch you. Come down to the river and get on board at once!'

For the moment it really seemed the best thing to do, and he was just going down to the boat, which was now nearing the shore, when the preacher caught sight of him from behind and called out to Mrs. White in a loud voice:

'Monster, what brings you to this place?'

So saying, he raised his staff and was just about to strike out at her, when Mrs. White, Little Green and the boat disappeared under the waves.

Hsü was so horrified and amazed that his soul scarcely clove to his body.

'Who is this priest?' he hurriedly asked the people standing by.

'He is the Master of the Ocean of Law,' said someone who knew the priest, 'and he is reckoned as the Living Buddha of the day.'

The man was about to tell more, when the Master sent one of his attendants to bring Hsü Hsüan to speak to him.

'Where did you first meet this monster?' he asked.

Thus questioned, Hsü told him the whole story from the very beginning.

'No doubt this meeting was determined by your *karma*,' said the priest. 'But only an uncommon degree of physical passion could have led you to fall again and again into so blind and senseless an infatuation. Happily, your ordeals are now nearly over. Go back at once to Hangchow and practise constant devotions. If you have any trouble with her again, come and see me at the Temple of Pure Mercy, to the south of the Lake.'

Hsü warmly thanked the priest and hurried home, to find that Mrs. White and Little Green had indeed disappeared. There was, of course, no longer the slightest doubt in his mind that they were both evil spirits.

Early next morning he went to Needle Bridge and told the apothecary Li K'o-yung what had happened.

'As a matter of fact,' said Li, 'I saw her in her true form when she came here on my birthday, and was frightened nearly to death. But I was annoyed at your setting up on your own, so I didn't feel like saying anything about it. But now that the matter has been cleared up, I don't see any objection to your coming back and living here for the present.'

However, a few days later a general amnesty was declared and all offenders, except those guilty of very heinous crimes, were allowed to return to their homes. Hsü was delighted to hear this news, and having thanked Li K'o-yung for all his kindness, he went back to Hangchow and at once called upon his brother-in-law and sister, before whom he prostrated himself four times. When his prostrations were over, Secretary Li said to him reproachfully:

'On two successive occasions when you got into trouble with the authorities, I took a good deal of trouble to help you, and I think you might at least have sent me a wedding-card just to let me know that you had got married during your absence. It seems to me inexcusable.'

'But I haven't got a wife,' said Hsü, 'and I don't know why you should suppose that I have.'

He had not finished speaking when his sister came out from the back rooms, accompanied by Mrs. White and Little Green!

'I don't know why you shouldn't own up,' said Hsü's sister. 'It's not a crime to get married, and anyhow, here is your wife!'

'No, no, Sister,' cried Hsü, utterly dismayed, 'she is an evil spirit. Do not believe a word she says.'

At this point Mrs. White joined in the conversation.

'Since we became man and wife,' she said, 'I have never failed in my duty towards you. Why should you listen to what strangers tell you and let them estrange you from me? If you disown me, what is to become of me? As a married woman I have no other home but yours.' So saying, she burst into a frenzy of convulsive sobbing.

Hsü, quite beside himself, dragged his brother-in-law to the floor and hastily told him of all that had happened. 'There is not the slightest doubt', he said, 'that she is a White Snake Spirit. Surely there must be some way of getting rid of her.'

'If she is really a snake,' said Secretary Li, 'there ought not to be any difficulty. There is a snake-charmer called Dr. Tai who lives opposite the White Horse Shrine. He's extremely clever at catching snakes. I'll go with you and arrange for him to come here and catch her. That's the thing to do.'

They found Dr. Tai standing in his doorway. 'What can I do for you two gentlemen?' he asked at once.

'There's a large white snake in my house,' said Secretary Li, 'and we want you to catch it for us. Here is a tael of silver, and you shall have something more for your trouble when the snake is caught.'

Dr. Tai took the money and asked what address he was to come to. 'You gentlemen go home,' he said, 'and I'll follow you presently.'

He hastily prepared a jar of red orpiment and a jar of boiled medicine-water, and went round to Li's house. He was met by Hsü, who directed him to the inner apartments. Dr. Tai found the door that led to the women's quarters locked.

'Is anyone there?' he said, knocking.

'Who are you,' a voice asked, 'and what right have you to be here?'

'A very good right indeed,' said Dr. Tai. 'I was specially asked to come and catch a snake.'

Mrs. White realized at once that Hsü had sent for him to catch her.

'There's a snake here all right,' she said laughing. 'But I doubt if you will be able to catch it.'

'My family has been in this line of business for seven or eight generations,' said Dr. Tai, 'famous snake-catchers, all of them. I should be surprised if this particular job was beyond my powers.'

The door suddenly opened.

'If you are so sure you can catch it, then come in!' she said.

He pushed aside the curtain and was just about to enter the room when there swept past him through the doorway a gust of dank wind, so icy-cold that his hair stood on end and he saw a huge serpent, as big round as a well-bucket and with eyes like

great lamps, shooting itself straight at him. This sudden apparition so startled him that he fell over backwards, and his orpiment bowl and medicine jar were smashed to pieces. The snake opened its great blood-red mouth, bared its snow-white fangs and made as though to bite Dr. Tai. In the nick of time he scrambled to his feet and ran for his life back to the reception hall, where he was met by Secretary Li and Hsü Hsüan.

'Well, how did the snake-catching go?' asked Secretary Li.

'You can have your money back,' said Dr. Tai. 'Snakes I can deal with, but not fiends. This job nearly cost me my life.' And without turning his head, he rushed out of the house.

For a moment Hsü and the Secretary stood face to face, utterly nonplussed. Soon, however, they heard the voice of Mrs. White calling to Hsü to come to her.

'What effrontery,' she cried, 'to send for a snake-catcher to catch me! Look here, once and for all! If you treat me properly, I'll do anything in the world for you. But if you don't, I shall bring a hideous end not on you only, but upon this whole city and everyone in it!'

When Hsü heard this, his heart turned cold and his gall quaked. Not daring to say a word in reply, he rushed out into the street and left the town by the Clear Wave Gate. Here he hesitated for a while, not knowing what to do next. Suddenly he remembered the Master of the Ocean of Law, and how he had said to him, 'If you have any more trouble, go to the Temple of Pure Mercy and ask for me'. As his feet had carried him at random as far as this, why not go a little farther and try to get help from the Master? He went on to the Temple of Pure Mercy and asked the superintendent if the Master of the Ocean of Law ever visited the temple.

'No,' said the superintendent, 'he has never been here.'

Deprived of this last hope and not daring to go home, Hsü fled to the Long Bridge and, staring at the blue waters of the Lake, he said to himself, 'Surely it would be better to put an end to all this by my own death, rather than live on only to involve others in my calamity?'

He was just going to jump in, when a voice behind him said 'Young man, why are you throwing away your life? If you are in trouble, let us talk it over together.'

He turned his head and saw that it was the Master of the Ocean

of Law hastening towards him in his cassock, with his alms-bowl slung over his back and his Meditation Staff in his hand.

'Save me from death, oh, save me!' cried Hsü, kneeling in a posture of utter submission.

'Where is the monster now?' asked the Master.

'In my brother-in-law's house,' said Hsü.

'Go quietly home,' said the Master, handing his alms-bowl to Hsü, 'and when your wife is not looking ram this bowl down on to her head. Don't just put it there, but press it down with all the strength in your body. You have nothing to be afraid of. I know what I am about.'

He thanked the Master heartily, and went home, where he found Mrs. White, no longer in serpent form, sitting in the parlour hurling the foulest abuse at everyone, right and left. He slipped up stealthily behind her when she was not looking and rammed the bowl down on her head, using all the strength in his body. He went on pressing and pressing, down and down, till at last the bowl completely covered her and she could not be seen at all. But even then he dared not let go, but went on pressing down the bowl with all his might. Then suddenly a voice spoke from inside the bowl:

'How can you bear to inflict this miserable death upon me after we have lived so many years together as man and wife? Let go for a moment, I entreat you. It is not much to ask.'

He was just wondering what to do next when someone announced that there was a priest waiting outside, who said he had come to exorcize an evil spirit. Hsü at once asked Secretary Li to go and let him in.

'I've got her safe in here,' said Hsü when the Master arrived. 'I must ask your Reverence to dispose of her.'

The Master muttered some unintelligible spell, and then lifted the alms-bowl. There lay Mrs. White, shrunk to only about seven or eight inches long, face downward, looking for all the world like a discarded puppet.

'What cursed monster are you', roared the priest, 'that you have dared molest a human being? I charge you to confess.'

'I was a white python,' she answered. 'During a great storm I and a green fish came for shelter to the Western Lake. We happened to meet Hsü Hsüan, and I became so enamoured of him that I could not contain myself and broke the laws of

Nature. Fortunately, whatever else I have done, I have inflicted mortal injury on no one, and I look to your Reverence to show compassion to me.'

'Sins of the flesh,' said the Master, 'are a very serious matter and cannot be overlooked. But in view of the self-discipline that you exercised for so many hundred years, you shall not be utterly annihilated. Now show yourself in your true form!'

Mrs. White at once turned into a white snake and Little Green into a green fish. The white snake raised its head and looked at Hsü.

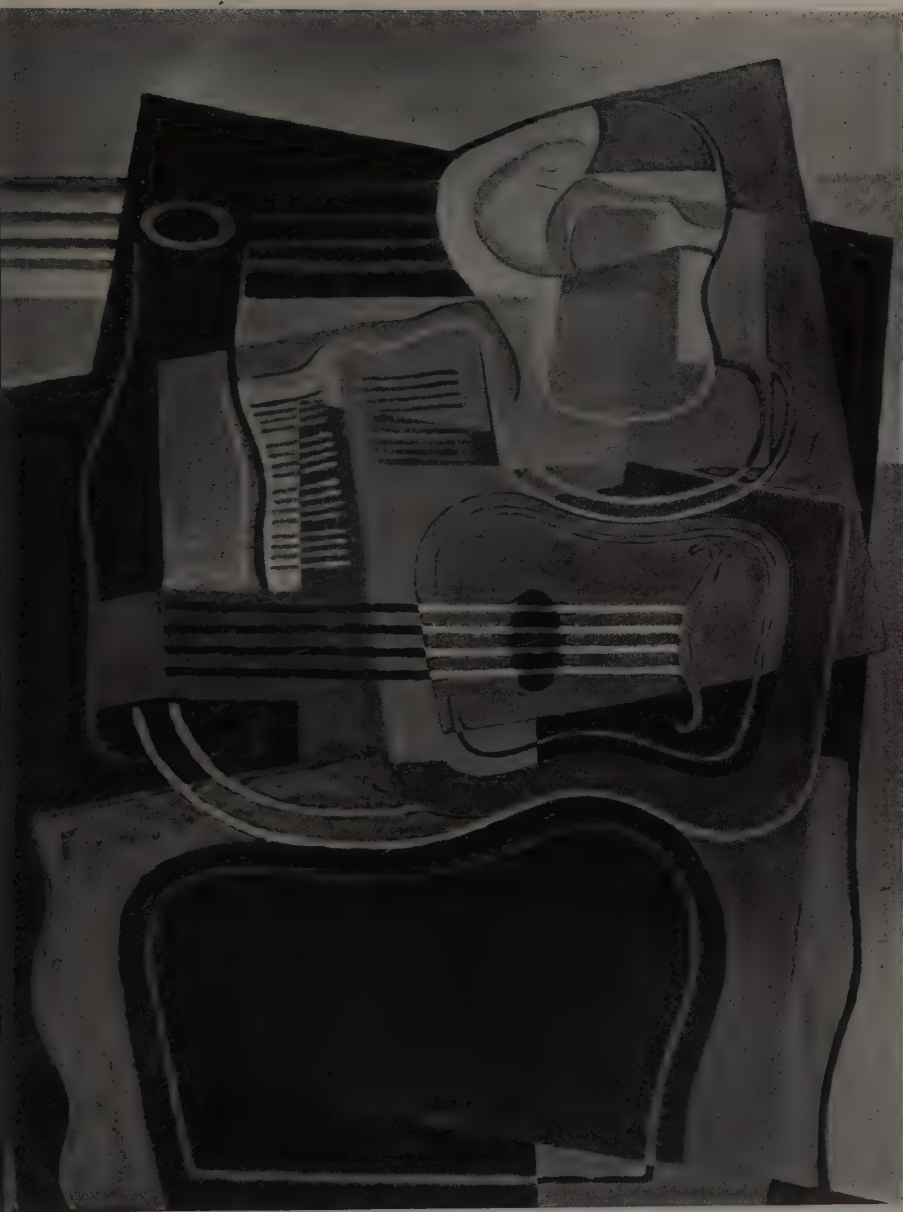
The Master put both creatures into his alms-bowl, pulled down a fold of his dress so that it covered the top of the bowl and carried it to the Thunder Peak Temple. Here he put the bowl down and got workmen to bring stone and brick and build a pagoda on top of it. Hsü Hsüan then appealed to the faithful and collected so large a sum that the pagoda was carried to a height of seven storeys, so that the white snake and green fish might never be able to come out again into the world of men. After they were safely pinned down, the Master pronounced the following quatrain:

Sooner shall the Western Lake run dry
 Than the Thunder Peak Pagoda fall
 Sooner shall the river tide not rise,
 Than the White Snake come back into the world.

When the Master had recited this verse, the people did homage and scattered. But Hsü earnestly desired to take Orders. He took the Master of the Ocean of Law for his teacher and was finally tonsured and ordained standing under the pagoda. He lived piously for many years and then one night died suddenly, without illness. The priests brought a pyx, cremated him and put his ashes under a cairn in front of the pagoda.

Marvels are for the most part not worth relating. But it is a marvel that has made the Thunder Peak famous among the wonders of the Western Lake. So those who admire the Thunder Peak Pagoda will of necessity wish to acquaint themselves with the strange story of its origin.

[*Translated from the Chinese by* ARTHUR WALEY]



JUAN GRIS: Guitar, Bottle and Fruit Dish. Oil. 1922

Collection Curt Valentin, New York



ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF PAINTING

Note.—The following is the text of a lecture delivered by Juan Gris in the Michelet Hall of the Sorbonne on 15 May 1924, before the Société des Études Philosophiques et Scientifiques. The present translation is its first publication in the English language and is extracted from *Juan Gris: His Life, His Work and His Writings*, by Daniel Henry Kahnweiler, a volume which is being published during 1946 by Curt Valentin of New York.

IN submitting for your consideration a few reflections on painting, which have come to me in the course of exercising my profession, I am above all afraid of three things: first of boring you by talking of things that you already know; secondly, of not expressing myself clearly, and thirdly, of touching too closely upon my own work. For I consider that no man should talk of his own profession except with extreme caution, or better still not at all.

For the sake of clarity in this talk, I have arranged my thoughts in a certain order, and therefore I have selected a starting-point, namely: in order to paint, one must understand the possibilities of painting.

One of my friends, a painter,¹ has written: 'Nails are not made from nails but from iron'. I apologize for contradicting him, but I believe exactly the opposite. Nails are made from nails, for if the idea of the possibility of a nail did not exist in advance, there would be a serious risk that the material might be used to make a hammer or a curling tong.

A painting is not made simply with canvas, brushes and colours. One can produce a landscape, a nude woman, gleaming saucepans, triangles or squares, but there will be no painting unless the idea of painting exists *a priori*. We must, therefore, try to find out what painting consists of and from what it springs.

Everybody knows that air of contemplation which is the pride of the bourgeois on his Sunday morning walk, or of the commercial traveller in a train, as they survey the scene. Three broad categories of contemplation can be distinguished:

First: People whose emotive condition remains unchanged by a natural or industrial spectacle or by an artistic one.

¹ It was Braque.

Secondly: People whose emotion is intense in front of an artistic manifestation.

Thirdly: Those who feel the same intense emotion in front of a natural or industrial spectacle as they do in front of an artistic manifestation.

This third category of spectators, then, feels a similar emotion before an extra-artistic spectacle to that which a spectator of the second category feels before a work of art. Now as the spectacle in itself is not changed, it is the spectator who has modified it during his contemplation. To use a simile, I would compare what is seen to a game of cards. The cards are the elements of which the spectacle is composed. When a man feels emotion at what he sees it means that he has made some personal modification in the arrangement of the cards or elements. Without abolishing or changing them, he has grouped them in a new way. He has shuffled the cards and sees them set out in a different manner.

Naturally, a pictorial emotion will only be produced by a collection of pictorial elements: that is to say elements which belong to the world of painting. For every spectacle, even those resulting from art, can be considered in various lights.

An object becomes a spectacle directly there is someone to look at it. But an object can be looked at in innumerable ways. Thus, a housewife will consider a table from a utilitarian angle. A carpenter will note the way that it is made and the quality of the wood used. A poet—a bad poet—will find in it a symbol of the peace of the home. And so on. . . . For a painter, it will quite simply be a grouping of flat, coloured forms. And I mean flat forms, for it is more a sculptor's business to think of these forms in terms of space.

Thus, every object will offer a number of different professional aspects; but in addition to these professional aspects there is something which we might call the basic idea of an object. This idea or conception lies outside any profession and outside scientific truth. It is sometimes even an hereditary error. Scientifically speaking, all vertical lines converge towards the centre of the earth's attraction; humanly speaking, they are parallel. Despite its different aspects, the table of which I spoke just now is the same idea of a table for the housewife, the carpenter and the poet. The only difference is in the elements they extract from it.

Now why should one expect a painter to extract from an

object the elements proper to other professions? Why should he not be content simply with the elements proper to his own profession? The man who, when he paints a bottle, attempts to express its material substance rather than paint a group of coloured forms, should become a glass-blower rather than a painter.

The pictorial elements have altered according to the pre-occupations of each period. At certain moments in history importance was attached to the pure elements of painting and they were endowed with religious significance; at other times a scientific influence has been at work. We know that Leonardo thought of the chemical composition of the atmosphere when he painted the blue of a sky. The luscious living flesh of the Venetian painters' nudes, in which one can feel the blood pulsating beneath the golden skin, can only be explained in terms of the physiological advances of the Renaissance.

The sum of these elements, with the influences to which they are exposed, represent at any one moment the æsthetic outlook of the period; and there can be no doubt that a purely scientific discovery, applicable only to the technique of painting, such as the Italian discovery of perspective, has influenced every æsthetic creed since the Renaissance.

It is solely the need for some particular category of elements that causes a variation in the objects or models selected for painting. On the whole the choice falls on those which most clearly and most liberally provide the elements required by the æsthetic. The painter who works with elements conditioned by anatomical or physiological considerations will not choose the same models as the painter who uses elements conditioned by effects of light, or the one who employs elements conditioned by effects of perspective. But an emotion produced by a group of elements belonging to different worlds will be most impure and crude on account of the anomalous elements of which it is composed. To continue my simile, I would say that the cards which have been shuffled belong to different packs.

This leads us to the conclusion that, if an emotion is to be expressed in paint, it must, above all, be based on elements belonging to an æsthetic creed which has been produced by the period. Every æsthetic idea should bear a date. I shall show later that the same is true of technique, for though a work in paint may be inspired by a bizarre and anomalous choice of elements, this does

not prove that it is a real painting. Nor will a work in paint be a real painting if the pictorial elements of which it is composed are not ordered and arranged by means of an appropriate technique. It is not enough to shuffle the right cards: one must also know how to deal them. And if the cards, or elements, are properly set out, they express the primary idea, a conception of the object which is human and common to everyone, and which, in our example of the table, is the same for the housewife, the carpenter and the poet. The representation of the substantial world (and I say substantial because I consider the idea of an object as substantive) can give rise to an æsthetic, to a choice of elements whose sole function is to reveal the world of ideas which exists purely in the mind. In all great periods of art one senses the desire to represent a substantial and spiritual world. The representation has been influenced and varied in accordance with the needs and obsessions of each age. The role of technique on each occasion has merely been to qualify this substantial world. Certain technical methods are common to all periods; others are less constant and vary according to the æsthetic. For example, the Italian use of perspective was simply dictated by the scientific requirements of the Renaissance æsthetic. Only the purely architectural element in painting has remained constant. I would even say that the only true pictorial technique is a sort of flat, coloured architecture.

There are several forms of architecture. All architecture is construction, but not every construction is architecture. Before a construction, whether intellectual, material, visual or acoustic, can be architecture it must fulfil certain conditions.

All constructions of the natural world, whether organic or inorganic, are architectural. The molecular structure of a body distinguishes it from other bodies and gives it individuality. The phenomenon of crystallization provides fine examples of natural architecture, for the same body always crystallizes in the same volume and form. When oxygen and hydrogen meet they combine in certain proportions to produce a certain quantity of new molecules, the quantity depending on the amount of each element introduced into the mixture, neither more nor less. Water can be produced synthetically which is identical both in quality and quantity with natural water. This is an example of chemical architecture, of real architecture, because the result of this mixture has a totally different unity, consistency and chemical proportions

to those of the elements from which it is made. It has a new individuality. But the mixture of water and wine, for example, only produces a construction. The result has no new chemical properties, no unity, no consistency and no individuality. In short, it is not a synthesis.

A motor car is not architecture, but a more or less perfect construction. It is only a synthesis in so far as it has a utilitarian value. It can be divided into a number of organs, each of which exists separately and has a very distinct personality. The engine, the wheels and the coach-work are too distinct and interchangeable as parts for them to possess a single and unique affinity. But in itself the engine, which is subtly conceived as a delicate arrangement of somewhat impersonal parts, comes nearer to being architecture. And the wheels, or rather the wheel in its simplest form, is one of the most perfect pieces of architecture created by man, on account of its unity, its consistency and its positive, synthetic character.

True architecture cannot be broken up into different pieces, each of which is autonomous and exists alone. A fragment of architecture will be no more than an odd, mutilated object which ceases to exist when it is removed from the one place where it belongs. Construction, then, is merely the imitation of architecture. The technique of painting is flat, coloured architecture, and not construction. It is based on the relationship between colours and the forms which contain them.

One can now say that whereas the æsthetic is the sum of the relationships between the painter and the outside world, relationships which culminate in the choice of subject, technique is the sum of the relationships between the forms and the colours they contain and between the coloured forms themselves. This is composition and culminates in the picture.

Every form in a picture has three duties to perform—to the element it represents, to the colour it contains and to the other forms which, with it, make up the whole picture. In other words, it must correspond to an æsthetic, it must have an absolute value in a given set of architectural relationships, and it must have a relative value within the particular architecture of the picture.

Later on, we shall see why it is necessary for a collection of coloured forms to correspond to a certain number of elements, to a subject. But for the moment I want to show how forms can

correspond to colours. The first thing one notices on looking at a flat form is, obviously, that it possesses two basic properties, size and quality. I will explain this. Any given form, for example a perfect circle, will always have the quality of a circle no matter what area it covers. An equilateral triangle will always have the same quality no matter what its dimensions are. A form always has a quality and a size.

In the same way a colour also has two basic properties—quality and intensity: that is to say red, green or blue, and the degree of such colour which it has. Blue is always blue, whether it be pale or dark. There is the hue and its shade. Thus, one cannot help immediately noticing one analogy between the quality of a form and the hue it contains, between its size and the tonal shade.

To take a fairly simple example which appears paradoxical: it can be proved that the size of a form which is very pronounced counts for very little beside its quality in the mind of the spectator. Thus, a section of the lower part of the Eiffel Tower seems larger to the mind than the whole tower. This comes of the mind being struck by the impressive dimensions of this fragment of architecture when seen from close-to. The mind has grasped a large, uniform area. On the other hand, it is only from a distance or in pictures that it is struck by the form which is characteristic of the tower; and it is the quality of the form that the mind has retained which finds its expression in dimensions so large that they can only be made credible by an effort of reasoning.

Thus, when a form is very pronounced, its size is not of great importance. A tonal shade can be its substitute. Hence, if we have two forms of similar quality but of different size—two squares for example, one larger than the other but both of the same red hue—the smaller one will appear as large as the other if its shade is more luminous. But we must not let that deceive us. It is never possible to make up by tonal shades for a great discrepancy in size between forms. Where the contrast in size between two forms is great, our sensibility is more aware of the intermediate sizes than it is of the intermediate tonal shades linking two shades which are far apart in luminous intensity. For if the distance between the two shades is too pronounced we end by seeing them as two different hues. Thus, dark Prussian blue is almost black, and one cannot say that it is the same hue as the very dilute Prussian blue in white, which is very luminous.

A very pronounced difference in shade changes the quality of the hue. Only a slight difference in shade can, without an alteration in the hue, make up for a slight difference in size between two forms. If the difference in size is too great you can paint square 'A' in a shade as luminous as you like but it will never appear as large as square 'B'. On the other hand, with two squares of the same size, square 'C' will appear larger than square 'D' if it is more luminous.

We now have another analogy: some colours are more luminous and expansive, others darker and more concentrated. Some forms are also more expansive than others. Rectilinear forms are more concentrated than curvilinear ones, which are expansive. There is no form more expansive than the circle and none more concentrated than the triangle. These two forms correspond to the brightest and darkest tones on the palette.

Now a third analogy: some colours are warm, some are cold. Those going towards cadmium yellow are warmer than those going away towards cobalt blue. There are also warm and cold forms. Those approximating to geometrical figures are colder than those which tend away from them. Freakish and complex forms are certainly warmer. We can point to a fourth analogy: some colours are more dense and have more weight than others. Earthy colours are, on the whole, heavier and denser.

Some forms, also, have a very accentuated centre of gravity, whereas in others it is much weaker. Symmetrical forms are heavier in relation to their centre of gravity than complicated, asymmetrical ones. Geometrical figures and forms with a vertical axis have more gravity than forms with an unpronounced or non-vertical axis. These latter forms possess the same two properties and are, therefore, equivalent to those colours which are neither dense nor light. A fifth analogy is to be found in the opposition of two colours, which may correspond to a contrast between two different forms.

Now it is plain that we have here the very *basis* of a pictorial architecture, a sort of painter's mathematics. And only these mathematics are capable of establishing the composition of the picture. It is only this architecture that can give birth to the subject, that is to say an arrangement of certain elements of reality called forth by this composition. It seems to me more natural to make subject 'X' coincide with the picture that one has in mind

than to make picture 'X' coincide with a given subject. One must give arithmetical values to the terms of this algebraical equation which is the picture. This needs an explanation.

A picture is a synthesis, just as all architecture is synthesis. The æsthetic has analysed the pictorial world and has provided us with the elements. It is evident that these elements materialize by substituting themselves for the abstract forms which make up the picture, just as simple bodies of hydrogen and oxygen substitute themselves according to the formula H_2O to achieve the synthesis of water. To do the opposite would not make sense, for that way lies analytical art. Now an analytical art is the very negation of art itself.

You may raise the objection: Why need one give these forms the significance of reality, since a harmony already exists between them and they have an architectural unity? To which I would reply: The power of suggestion in every painting is considerable. Every spectator tends to ascribe his own subject to it. One must foresee, anticipate and ratify this suggestion, which will inevitably occur, by transforming into a subject this abstraction, this architecture which is solely the result of pictorial technique. Therefore, the painter must be his own spectator and must modify the appearance of the relationships between the abstract forms. Until the work is completed, he must remain ignorant of its appearance as a whole. To copy a preconceived appearance is like copying the appearance of a model.

From this it is clear that the subject does not materialize in the appearance of the picture, but that the subject, in materializing, gives the picture its appearance. I would insist on this point in order to dispel uncertainty. The architecture of picture-making, that is to say the technique, enables one to assemble on a given surface, which has form and therefore colour, certain coloured forms which call for certain elements 'X' drawn from the pictorial world. Our technical possibilities are fairly precise and our æsthetic world rather vague. It is a question of fitting this rather shapeless world into these formal necessities.

A philosopher has said: 'The senses provide the substance of knowledge but the mind gives it form'. Similarly the æsthetic is the substance and the technique is the mould. Hues and shades belong to the technique, local colours to the æsthetic. A substance should not become a colour, but a colour should become a

substance. Style is simply the perfect balance between æsthetic and technique. Artists of considerable stature have sometimes lacked style owing to a bad choice of subject. Others, more modest, have possessed it.

In the so-called 'decadent' periods of art, there is an over-development of technique to the detriment of the æsthetic. There is no selection, and the most variegated elements jostle each other in contemporary works. *Pasticheurs* imitate the accepted appearance of works of the past without understanding either their æsthetic or the higher laws by which they are ordered. For no work which is destined to become a classic can look like the classics which have preceded it. In art, as in biology, there is heredity but no identity with the ascendants. Painters inherit characteristics acquired by their forerunners; that is why no important work of art can belong to any period but its own, to the very moment of its creation. It is necessarily dated by its own appearance. The conscious will of the painter cannot intervene. An appearance which is deliberate and results from a desire for originality is sham; every deliberate manifestation of the personality is the very negation of personality.

Cézanne, a great architect of colour, has a personality stamped with the period in which he lived. His works could not be dated either before or after the time at which they were created.

Henri Rousseau, a clever constructor of painted surfaces, is not an essential link in the evolution of painting. His works could just as well have been painted either before or after the date they bear.

Certain issues still need to be defined after all that has been said. Painting for me is like a fabric, all of a piece and uniform, with one set of threads as the representational, æsthetic element, and the cross-threads as the technical, architectural or abstract element. These threads are interdependent and complementary, and if one set is lacking, the fabric does not exist.

A picture with no representational purpose is, to my mind, always an incomplete technical exercise, for the only purpose of any picture is to achieve representation. Nor is a painting which is merely the faithful copy of an object a picture, for even supposing that it fulfils the conditions of coloured architecture, it still has no æsthetic, that is to say no selection of the elements of the reality it expresses. It will only be the copy of an object and never a subject.

Beside the emotional necessities for establishing an æsthetic and a technique, there are the professional exigencies. To achieve unity in a painting there must be homogeneity, there must be a connection between its constituent parts. The rôle of technique is to give cohesion to the coloured forms which make up the picture. It is essential that the elements of the reality they signify should belong to the same category or the same æsthetic system.

The rôle of æsthetic analysis is to break down the material world, in order to select from it elements of the same category.

Technique should serve to elaborate all these formal elements into a coherent unity. Its rôle is synthetic.

Every period has felt this need for unity in a picture. An analysis of a certain æsthetic of light, a certain technical method—perspective or composition for example—has no other end except that of achieving synthesis.

Therefore, I will conclude by saying that the essence of painting is the expression of certain relationships between the painter and the outside world, and that a picture is the intimate association of these relationships with the limited surface which contains them.

[*Translated by DOUGLAS COOPER*]

RAYMOND MORTIMER

BACK TO ITALY AND GREECE: II

FLORENCE

ANOTHER coin into the Trevi fountain, and then by jeep through Spoleto, Perugia and Arezzo. It was May Day, and everywhere we came on processions, red banners, and gay red clothes. I haven't learnt much about Italian politics: this country provides so many more rewarding subjects for talk. I notice much less anxiety here than in France, much less passion than in Greece. Yet the Italians take an almost schoolboy delight in being able again to discuss politics. Rhetoric remains the traditional enemy: so many words, so few definitions. The Communists are obviously spending immense sums of money, the clergy are similarly lavishing

a wealth of eloquence. The Trieste business and the Russian demand for reparations from Italy do not smooth the Communist path. (I saw among many *graffiti* the pathetic, self-contradictory words: '*Evviva Trieste italiana e evviva Tito*'.) The current talk is that while the stupid Fascists have joined the *Uomo qualunque* movement the clever ones have become Communists. Why not? Millions made the same short voyage easily enough, in reverse, under Hitler.

The road through Umbria and Tuscany showed blessedly little trace of the military tide that had swept over it. A few dull houses shelled on the outskirts of Perugia; and a signpost, fantastic among the Umbrian oleanders and olives, 'To the Indian burning ghats'. Almost every street in Arezzo has lost a house; but this, I noticed with surprised relief, hardly affects the impression made by this so refined and felicitous hill-town; and the churches have escaped. I spent a long while in San Francesco.

Every generation finds itself peculiarly responsive to one or two artists, and I share with my contemporaries a passionate devotion to Piero della Francesca and Cézanne (and Degas is another whom I worship almost uncritically). I note the fact, but have no explanation for it. When, oh when, shall we be given a history of taste? Ruskin says nothing about Piero except that he has a pretty name; Pater does not mention him. The twentieth century has placed him among the highest gods.

What has struck me most forcibly in Italian painting, on this journey, has been the interest of the artists in drama. Giotto, Fra Angelico, Masaccio, Botticelli in his later years, Signorelli, Tintoret, the eclectics, all the baroque painters—how persistently they sought to display the telling gesture, the rapt or agonized expression of mouth and eye! Even Raphael in *The Transfiguration* is no less concerned with the dramatic significance of an upstretched arm than with its function as a girder in his design. Even Piero—coolest, most recollected of painters—includes in his *Chosroes* a kneeling warrior whose grimace and outflung hand dramatize the terror of death. In this century we have become anæsthetized to such triumphs; or rather, when the later artists achieve them, we are more often than not repelled. All our critical talk is of design and handling, of tactile values or significant form. Because dramatic representation is not essential to good painting, we dismiss it as irrelevant; because it so often crops up in bad painting,

we even deplore it as a vulgar disfigurement. (Which it often is: to enjoy the Raphael *Transfiguration* do we not have to overlook the histrionics in which the painter took such evident satisfaction?) This preoccupation of the Italian painters with the language of arm and eye came from belonging to a people among whom this language was vernacular. To us now it is alien, and we associate it chiefly with ham acting. In the eighteenth century the English, I feel sure, were as lavish with gestures as they were with tears. The nineteenth-century reaction against post-Raphaelite painting and architecture, the twentieth-century exclusive zeal for purely formal elements in pictures, both reflect our lack of sympathy with gesticulation—the word itself is pejorative. But whenever two Italians meet, they renew the expressive movements studied and fixed by Leonardo, Michelangelo, Tintoret and the Bolognese.

Every time I come to Florence I like it less. Yet it has not, like Rome, been vulgarly spoiled since first I knew it. The damage done by the Germans is indeed horrifying, all the bridges except the Ponte Vecchio destroyed, and a large part of the Borgo San Jacopo. (I wish Colonel Fuchs, who is alleged to be responsible, could be brought to trial for this outrage against Europe.) At the same time the damage is less than I had been told. I expected not to see one house standing of those which rise from the Arno between the Ponte Vecchio and the Ponte Santa Trinita; and I found that more than half of them had survived: the other central parts of Florence are intact.

Why, then, do I not like the place better? Is it that the palaces are prison-like, that the churches incline to primness? (This last word I hardly dare to write, and yet is there not in Santo Spirito and San Lorenzo a sacrifice of emotion to intellect, of vitality to refinement?) In other Tuscan towns, however, my response to the Quattrocento is ungrudging. I suspect that my liking for a city has now come to depend chiefly on one criterion: how pleasant is it to stroll in? This depends largely, of course, but not wholly, on the charm of the architecture. The narrow, traffic-crowded streets of Florence make walking a penance. London is nearly as bad; but almost all the centre of Paris is delightful; and Venice, with no wheeled traffic, is incomparable. There it is a pleasure even to lose one's way.

One must always return to Florence, for it has more good

pictures in it than anywhere else. This time I have found the Uffizi shut, the interior having been damaged. San Marco, for some reason, is also inaccessible, but the Pitti is open, and some of the Uffizi pictures are there. The Carmine and the Michelangelo sculpture in the Sagrestia Nuova seem more majestic than ever in a world that is losing all sense of human majesty.

I made an expedition to Poggio a Cajano to see the Pontormo fresco, as seductive a decoration as any in the world. (And the Schifanoia, and the Villa at Maser, and the Villa Valmarana? Well, I like best the beauty I happen to be with, whichever it is. Incidentally, the supreme Masters seldom can bring themselves to sacrifice other and nobler virtues to decorativeness. The Arena Chapel, the Brancacci Chapel, the Choir of San Francesco at Arezzo, the Vatican *Stanze*, the Scuola di San Rocco, are none of them apt, judged merely as decoration. The two most obvious exceptions are the Botticelli frescoes in the Louvre and Raphael's *Galatea* in the Farnesina, but these are isolated panels, not entire schemes.) The Villa Reale had been slightly battered, and was being repaired. Admirable the determination with which the Italians are setting themselves to restore. In the Valdarno I was struck by the massive viaducts of brick or masonry that had already been rebuilt, and in one town hundreds of new houses.

On the road to Poggio a Cajano, I twice stopped to ask the way, and I was tempted to do so again, so beautifully smiling was the politeness of the answers. The manners of the Tuscan *contadini* reveal a deeper civilization, a fuller humanity, than those of any other people I have encountered. And the landscape they have moulded reflects the same virtues. Not only do the villas and farms in the environs of Florence embellish the view, but the country itself is as it were exquisitely mannered: Man is responsible for the cypresses that punctuate the hillsides, but the gentleness of the mountainous skyline shows Nature at her most well bred. (This has been further softened by men planting trees: the horizon is drawn at Athens with a single penstroke, at Florence with a brush.) Yes, one must always return to Florence while one has eyes to see with, for the sake, above all, of the country around and its inhabitants. Here one can feel proud of belonging to the human race. In Florence itself the waiters and barbers walk straight out of Botticelli's pictures, every face is vivid with character.

Staying in a villa a few miles outside the city, I find a crimson rose and a scarlet carnation side by side upon my breakfast tray; and as I dress I watch gardeners picking up armfuls of azalea petals that have fallen in the night. There is a prodigious library in the villa, masterpieces by Domenico Veneziano, Lorenzetti, Signorelli and Cima, Chinese bronzes of the furthest refinement, and some of the best talk I have known for years. If I tear myself from the terraced garden, I am on a hillside striped with cypresses. (Some of them, I notice for the first time, carry, low down and isolated, a branch that rises like a sapling in the same steepled form as the tree, and that suggests a small crane clinging to its mother's breast, or is it a kangaroo stretching its neck from the pouch?) Young wheat and vines and olive trees concert their various greens. Here I have refound the *vraie douceur de vivre*.

VENICE

From Florence I took the Futa Pass, crossing what was the Gothic line. Villages with not a house left habitable, Pianora almost a Cassino. In Bologna some houses have gone, but the general impression is unspoiled. San Petronio intact, also San Stefano with its seven churches growing out of one another like multiplying cells. Ferrara, the Municipio burnt out, but walls standing; the Castello intact. (Alas, no time to visit the Schifanoja.) Padua, the Santo intact; and inside it, to my astonished delight, one of the Mantegna frescoes from the Eremitani; and I learn that there is another that was moved to the safety of the Cà d'Oro. This is wonderful news, for these Mantegnas show, at its finest, the early Renaissance intoxication with the notion of ancient Rome. (The only comparable expression of this was the Rimini Temple, which has been made a ruin.) Tea in Asolo, with a view over the Veneto, the campaniles like lead-pencils promising St. Mark's. Then, skirting Treviso, where seven thousand people were killed in a useless air-raid—they had come out in the streets, as usual, to watch delightedly our bombers on their way to cross the Alps—I came to the Lagoon.

During these long, onerous, insular years, my thoughts have kept returning to Venice. (Odd how man likes to confuse emotion with intellect: 'I was thinking of you', one says to the beloved, alike in English and French, when one means 'I was feeling about you'.) I have never seen the sun reflected from the Thames on

the underside of a leaning tree without remembering the stripes of light dappling the arches of the Venetian bridges. As I drove across the bridge from Mestre in the dark, I wondered whether my crystallization would not end in disappointment. Surely Venice could not be as beautiful as my image of it. But it is, it is! And I knew this the moment that I again reached the Canal, saw the scimitar prows bobbing above its ripples of black and gold, heard on its containing walls the heavy slap of water.

I have the wonderful luck to be staying, the guest of a most intelligent Englishman, whom I had not previously met, in the Casetta Rossa, a little house with a garden on the Canal, almost opposite the unfinished palace Venier degli Leoni. Walking in a bewilderment of delight and recognition to the Piazza, I found the square beside Santa Maria del Giglio cluttered with rubble. Had there after all been a bomb in the heart of Venice? No, this was the remains of an air-raid shelter; and in other *campi* I found the shelters still standing, shaped like Nissen huts, but in concrete. Venice was in fact bombed, but only the dreary Marittima dock, and with exemplary precision. A German munition ship blew up, and, very strangely, the frescoes in the Labia Palace, which is not near the dock, were damaged—a largish patch gone beneath Cleopatra's pearl and one of the figures on the balcony. It might have been much worse, for nothing else of importance has suffered.

The shops are as full as ever of stuff for tourists to buy, glass, tortoiseshell, beads, lace, but there are no tourists except the British troops on leave, with vermilion knees showing below their shorts. The chairs at Florian's are nine-tenths of them empty, and the price of a cup of coffee is indeed forbidding, three times higher than in Rome. The Army has requisitioned some of the Canal steamers, and by a most unlucky whim painted them red, green and white. (One must be glad, I suppose, that the design is taken from the Italian flag and not the Union Jack.) I can find no other change in Venice. Yes, I am forgetting that the Palazzo Vendramin, where Wagner died, has been turned into a gaming house. It is called the Casino, though this is the Italian word for a brothel, and the Italians are careful to give it the French pronunciation, accenting each syllable equally. Also, since I was last here, the lamp-posts have been removed from the Piazza. The new illumination, from headlights on top of the buildings, is an affront.

Pottering in the labyrinth of alleys, and up and down the steps of bridges, to pay my homage to favourite churches, Santa Maria Formosa, San Francesco della Vigna, San Giovanni in Bragora, the Madonna dell' Orto, the Gesuiti, I think of all the friends who have been with me in Venice. As one grows older the places one has known the best become peopled with ghosts, and, not least, with the ghosts of one's dead selves. When first I came here, there was an old-established colony of English and Americans: Mrs. Curtis at the Palazzo Barbaro, where Henry James and Sargent used to stay with her (I remember her telling me the story that Henry James took from her to make *The Aspern Papers*); Mrs. Eden with her garden on the Giudecca; the Princesse Edmond de Polignac, surrounded with musicians, herself a brilliant painter as well as a pianist, and with an unexpected passion for golf; Sir Hubert Miller, a gloriously Proustian character with a hundred gilt baroque angels in his dining-room; and Mrs. Johnstone at the Palazzo Contarini with the most beautiful of gardens, looking across the lagoon towards Murano. Everyone wanted to see this, and she received so many royal persons that she caught their arrogance without catching the politeness under which they disguise it. An American Jewess, married to a painter whose works one was never allowed to see, she had been converted to Catholicism; and her piety, which could not disenvenom her tongue, obliged her to tear from her Prousts, before they were bound, every page referring to M. de Charlus. I suppose he reminded her too exactly of some of her fellow-Venetians. Yet she was an uncommonly clever woman, and I wish that today I could ring her bell and wait, as I used to do, for a quarter of an hour, while the butler discovered whether she would condescend to give me audience.

If I had a gift for fiction, and a better memory, I would write a novel about this vanished Venetian colony. It was very different from the scallywag Capriote outpost described by Norman Douglas and Compton Mackenzie; but here, too, the expatriates, secure from the overshadowing that would have been their fate in London or Paris, could luxuriate into exorbitant personalities. Their quarrels were epic: gondoliers rowed wearily from palace to palace carrying declarations of war. Then, in the 'twenties, this little society, which had welcomed the cultivated pilgrim, began to find the Piazza noisy with invaders whom it was hard to

overlook, though they did not know the Frari from the Miracoli, and did not give a fig for the hierarchy of old residents. Venice in summer became fashionable with the pleasure-loving rich: bathing and backgammon at the Lido, fabulous fancy-dress parties in the hired palaces. The colony hated it. Convenient it might be to let your apartment for a fabulous rent, but you returned to find your servants spoiled by the vulgar profuseness of your tenants. Venice, you complained, was being desecrated by this frivolity. In fact, Venice was merely recovering an ancient function. Read Casanova, or for that matter Voltaire, and you see that it was the Monte Carlo of the eighteenth century.

Not only in Venice and Florence and Rome, but in every pleasant place from Rapallo to Taormina, there used to be, when first I came to Italy, colonies of English. They ransacked the antique shops for painted furniture, they made lovely gardens, they attended the English church. And there were pensions murmurous with ladies interchanging advice about their watercolours before retiring to brew tea in their bedrooms. All these, colonists or regular migrants, knew the Italians, and therefore loved them. (If sometimes they loved them in the fullest sense of the term, the reciprocal benefit was all the more marked.) But Fascism arrived, and though the Italians almost all remained charming to us, fewer and fewer English were to be seen in the hotels. The older colonists died, and were not replaced. Whereas thirty years ago no Englishman was thought tolerably cultivated if he did not know Italy, now few of my friends under forty have been here. This does more than destroy Anglo-Italian understanding: it coarsens English civilization; and the kindness with which I have been received everywhere by the Italians convinces me that they long, as I do, for the connection to be renewed.

MILAN

Leaving Venice for Milan, I felt like Adam expelled from his happy seat in Paradise, or Titus leaving Bérénice! (*Je l'aime, je le fuis: Titus m'aime, il me quitte.*) I stopped on the way to look at Vicenza, Verona, and Brescia. From all accounts the 'pattern bombing' of Vicenza was a waste of good explosive, and on what a target! I know no city more packed with noble architecture. But even here, not through precision bombing, but by marvellous luck, the damage is much less hideous than I feared. The basilica

roofless and burnt out, but its façades hardly hurt: the Loggia del Capitano, the Museo Civico, the Palazzo Thiene, and the exquisite Teatro Olimpico untouched. Verona has lost its medieval bridge, but no harm has come to the Piazza del'Erbe, the Piazza dei Signori, the Scaliger tombs or San Zeno.

Everywhere rumour has exaggerated the extent of the destruction. You are told that there is not a column left of some masterpiece, and you find that not a column has been damaged. Human beings have fallen in love with disaster, have become addicts of calamity. Individuals and classes and nations are the same. They boast competitively of their sufferings. 'We had the Germans', 'We had the bombs', 'We are worse fed than you', 'Your tuberculosis rate is lower than ours', 'Your capital city is intact', 'Your inflation is not so great as ours', 'We were occupied', 'We fought alone', 'My son was killed', 'My daughters were tortured', 'I was in a concentration camp'. That such statements are often agonizingly true may excuse them, but cannot make them commendable. The old-fashioned *parvenu* pride in prosperity is far preferable to this new ostentation with which, like mendicants, we parade our sores.

Whereas self-conceit is more comic than noxious, self-pity stifles pity for others. No vice is more easy to fall into, more difficult to throw off. Which of us cannot bring tears to his eyes by thinking how unfairly he has been treated? Give way to a taste for the luxury of woe, and you will never emerge into the simplicity of joy: self-pity destroys self-help. For the first time since the Renaissance, the mind of Western Europe has lost faith in the possibility, and—far graver—in the desirability, of happiness. The stoicism required in total war has lately degenerated into an even more odious disposition, a grotesque and paralysing masochism. Christianity at its most ascetic retains a solid foundation of hedonism, inviting us to sacrifice earthly pleasures to attain those which are eternal and infinite. The glumness now fashionable is gratuitous, not a means but an end in itself. Nothing is now more important than to rehabilitate the notion of pleasure—and, as an inseparable concomitant, the notion of quality.

Exaggeration of war damage has deflected me into this homily, which is not directed especially at the Italians. On the whole, their vitality, their native sense and good manners, encourage them to carry their troubles gaily. They may be thought to carry their

disinvolture even to excess. 'He was fool enough to drag us into this war; why should *we* suffer more than we already have?' Few of them conceive that a people has any responsibility for its government. Is this the result of twenty years of Fascism; and, before that, of governments which, whether autocratic or parliamentary, took little stock of public opinion? Or is it only human nature? How many Frenchmen remember that the Chamber, by a huge majority, endorsed Pétain's armistice; how many Englishmen that they averted their ears from Churchill to applaud the imbecilities of Baldwin and Chamberlain?

Having made two unjust wars, the Italians call for a just peace. One sympathizes, but things don't work like that; and, in any case, no peace can be just to everyone. That is no excuse, however, for making it needlessly unjust to the Italians. Why not leave them more of their fleet, for instance? After all, a number of ships did their gallant best to join us. If I were an Italian taxpayer, I should not want such expensive apparatus, certainly useless without an air force and, even with one, probably obsolete. But a country without a navy feels like a woman without a string of pearls.

What the Italians resent, and justly, is the way we forget the help they gave us. Forget? The British public does not forget, for it has never known. It may be that some Italians like to remember more than actually happened. But the truth is impressive enough, apart from all exaggeration, for nearly 130,000 Italians were killed in the struggle against the Germans. The courage displayed in the north was superb. And it is ignoble not to give the British the facts. A friend of mine who escaped from an Italian prison camp, and was entertained by peasants for a year with supreme courage and kindness, tells me that the War Office still will not let him publish his story. He is profoundly grateful to the Italians and loud in praise of their virtues. I believe that nearly fifty thousand British who escaped owe a similar debt to the Italian people. (A group of officers moved freely for months in good Roman society, frequenting the same restaurants and night-clubs as the Germans. One of them at the opera with Italian friends found Keitel in the next box, and got him to autograph his programme.) Much of the anti-Italian feeling in England is spread by the prisoners who did not escape, and a good many of these did not want to. Mussolini's attack on France was an unsurpassably squalid little attempt to get something for nothing.

And, for that matter, Italian foreign policy, even before Fascism, was peculiarly cynical. But common sense suggests that we should never again allow the Italians to alienate themselves from the Western Europe to which they belong, which, indeed, they have done as much as any other people to create. In a world where there is so much carefully fostered hatred, let us do everything conceivable to make friends again with a people that is prepared to like us.

TURIN

The finest square is half burnt out, but Turin is much pleasanter than I remembered. (Yes, it invites one to loaf.) At the same time it is notably un-Italian, nearer to Lyons than to Milan, and centuries distant from Naples. A number of people here, as everywhere in Italy, have been charming to me: I only hope that none of them was equally charming to the Germans. This business of meeting those who may have been 'collaborators' is in every country very vexing. The blacker a man's record, the more gracious, as a rule, his welcome to the English visitor. When first I went back to Paris, I felt obscurely once or twice that old acquaintances were using me as Persil or Lux.

Visiting the Church of the Consolazione, which I remembered for its singular baroque, I have found a cloister hung with votive pictures recording escapes owed to the miraculous Madonna. There must be a school of Sunday painters who provide these ingenuous tributes for a few *lire*. After looking at the usual men, women and children falling out of windows, pinned under trams, cutting their wrists instead of the sausage, I came on a large group of pictures, relics of our air-raids upon Turin: the sky a swarm of Lancasters, bombs falling, flames rising, corpses everywhere, and the grateful donors wonderfully preserved. Some of these touching works showed a tenement building (with a bomb just missing it), and had been given jointly by all the tenants.

I have still to be convinced that what was called the 'psychological' bombing, that is to say, the indiscriminate bombing, of Milan and Turin was not a miscalculation as well as a wickedness. It wounded or killed miserable people who were already longing for peace, and, indeed, demonstrating against the war. It made them not only less well disposed to the Allies but less able to oppose their Government and the Germans.

MILAN AGAIN

Castiglione Olona, an hour or so from here, is one of the very few places that I have seen for the first time on this journey. A delicious village, climbing up a narrow ridge above a river, with the earliest Renaissance church in Lombardy, and a Gothic church with enchanting frescoes by Masolino. Nearby I called with a letter of introduction upon the Italian owner of a noble villa. He was, alas, ill, and I was taken round the garden by an elderly Lancashire woman, who had come here some thirty years ago as nurse to the owner's granddaughter. During the war she was hidden from the Germans in a convent: 'I hated it. I am a Protestant, you know. Those nuns! They come up behind you without your hearing them, so quiet, and all in black, too!' She heard sometimes, she told me, from her sister in Blackpool, but she didn't think of going to England. Too expensive. Obviously her employers were devoted to her, but I think she spoke only indifferent Italian. Thirty years! Again I wish I knew how to write short stories.

The *Cimitero monumentale* here in Milan deserves three stars from Baedeker. The richest burgesses compete in the ostentation of their family tombs, edifices some of them two or even three storeys high, and shouldering one another in an extravagant disparity of styles. Egyptian, for some reason (perhaps the Egyptian cult of the dead) is the most popular, so that you wander apparently among stage settings for *Aïda*. Often the interior is embellished with frescoes. Then there are Roman, Gothic, Romanesque, Renaissance, and even modernistic structures—the last looking like pavilions in an international exhibition. And the sculpture! One titanic figure with a foot a yard long sprawls over elaborately irregular rocks to look down on a full-size yoke of oxen. A twenty-year-old girl lies supine with a crucifix between her naked breasts. (The vagaries of Italian religion are apt to discountenance English Catholics.) The expense and exuberance of the whole affair are fabulous. The acme of *parvenu* ostentation? But these monstrosities differ from the magnificent monuments of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries only in design: the purpose is identical. Several large bombs have exacerbated the surrealism of the cemetery. (Milan is by far the most damaged of the cities I have visited.) Pyramids have been split asunder, columns with lotus capitals thrown down, and the

masterpieces of the Venticento Milanese sculptors stand headless and armless, premature antiques.

DOMODOSSOLA

This frontier brims with memories. Breakfast between Lausanne and Brigue; the tunnel; and Italy, at first in the Alpine gorges reluctant to unveil, then in an instant exposing proudly, overwhelmingly, its most voluptuous *appâts*, the Beautiful Island in the Major Lake. How this repeated excitement, these acts of possession, have stamped themselves on my heart! Of the journey in the opposite direction I have no recollections, though I know that I have made it just as frequently. It is the life-enhancing hours that one, how wisely, selects to remember; and today, after passing Baveno on my way north, I felt that I was being gently disanimated.

Though the half-hour I spent in the railway station at Milan, which has claims to be the ugliest building in Italy, marked the end of my six weeks' escape into Elysium, it brought me a deep happiness. My luggage was in the train, and I strolled up and down the platform, without impatience, without anxiety, knowing exactly when I should leave, far from the *Picture Posts* of 1945 that furnish the waiting-rooms of airfields; and I saw for the first time in seven years railway coaches labelled *Roma Milano Parigi, Venise Lausanne Calais*. The Jugoslavs refuse to let the Orient Express pass their savage frontier, but through the arteries of historic Europe, *deis gratias*, the blood is running once again.

SELECTED NOTICES

English Literature and Ideas in the Twentieth Century. By H. V. Routh. Methuen. 11s. 6d.

THE object of Dr. Routh's book is to discuss in relation to the ideas of the time 'every name which serves the spirit of twentieth-century literature'; its method is to group a number of writers under general chapter-headings and devote to each an independent section. They order this matter better in France. Julien Benda, in *La France Byzantine*, has recently given a classic example of method in this field, and he has done so by examining the ideas objectively in the foreground and illustrating them from contemporary work, while Dr. Routh, by reversing the process, gets so entangled in a crowd of minor personalities that his criticism of ideas is reduced to fragments of highly subjective comment. The reviewer's epithet for this kind of thing is 'pungent'. Dr. Routh is absolutely pungent, and if you want to hold your own at a literary lunch you had better take his book with you on the 'bus. Nobody else will know that Charles Morgan's middle name is Langbridge, and if they don't respond when you tell them that de la Mare's popularity is largely due to his personal charm you can turn paradoxical and knock them flat with Dr. Routh's statement that Barrie showed 'more intelligibly and sympathetically than Proust how to start on *la recherche du temps perdu*'. Should you, however, be seriously interested in ideas you will be disappointed to find several pages spent on Masfield and a dozen lines on Wilfred Owen, puzzled to discover a long paragraph on Howard Spring, but no mention of Evelyn Waugh or Miss Compton Burnett, saddened to note that once again 'the Sitwells' are lumped together like Briareus, and delighted that Auden's posthumous reputation, if he is to have one at all, is already pigeon-holed among the poets of natural scenery.

Although Dr. Routh makes no reference to the outstanding fact in the English literature of this century, its intellectual debt to France, Germany and America, it would be unfair to play down his wide reading and general acumen on account of a few absurdities; but having made that acknowledgement one is left wondering whether the spirit of literature is ever served by an assemblage of opinions offered without evidence. 'If Eliot writes no more he will be remembered, not very distinctly, as one of the few interwar poets who knew what he wanted to say.' That is the most deadening kind of criticism. It casts on its theme a dull flat light particularly inappropriate to an examination of ideas and regularly fatal to perception or feeling. You can't even pass examinations on it.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

The Pilgrim Hawk. By Glenway Wescott. Hamish Hamilton. 5s.

HERE is a most exquisite little story. By all means buy it (only five shillings) and read. Some visitors, a married couple, come to spend the afternoon at a house outside Paris. Through the eyes of the narrator, as the summer afternoon wears on, against a background of the household life—the catching of the pigeons for the pie for supper and the jealousies of the beautiful Moroccan cook and her husband—the loneliness of the narrator himself, and the walks in the French gardens and park—the drama of the visiting pair materializes. The chief figure in the book is the lady's pet hawk, perching all the while on her wrist, which comes subtly to symbolize the stormy love between her and her husband. In fact, love in general is the theme; and most realistic and sensitive is Mr. Glenway Wescott's sketch of the strange, wild, anguished bird.

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